

MLP FIMHalo: Towards the broken dawn

by Evident Disaster

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Summary: 2551 During a mission to defeat the covenant, a corvette of marines is lost in transit from battle, they are scattered onto a world where war is but a lost memory. Where magic and friendship meet, here comes the UCAF marines. CH17, time to begin the first part to Siege of Canterlot, tragedy strikes the heart of Twilight and rage burns in Celestia, prepare for war!

1. Chapter 1

MLP FIM/Halo: Towards the broken dawn

AN: I know that this is probably going to get much fire for including two of the most controversial content, which is going to be violence, which I do for many stories on , but the other one being anthropomorphic-ponies, I know that there's a ton of arguments being flung over the whole length of the fanbase. Which has really 'saddened' me about why the community opposes them, aside from the horrible artworks and sexualisation and etc, I can understand that. But I'm going in this because the symbolism of the human and the ponies are very important in understanding what difference is. Comparison of the cultural and sociological sides are also critical, which I'd rather not divulge much now about it.

As a fanfic writer who's made well over 24 stories some of which have been good others still a WIP, I believe that this fic should be worthwhile to try and produce. And also a warning before I begin, the fic is about the UCAF, not the UNSC. A slight difference from the main story line, if you'd like to know more about the AU that I've created you can go search for it at, there's no actual story behind it, but this just fills you in on some minor things.
[.net/u/2496373/Evident_Disaster](http://www.fanfiction.net/u/2496373/Evident_Disaster)

I don't know why the one on my profile doesn't work, so just use this link. Let the story begin.

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CH1: Age of acclimationâ€|

(AN: BTW this isn't necessary to read, but going through it would give you a bit of an insight into the history of the UCAF, it should help clear a few things up and you'll be surprised at how much history of the UCAF actually exists, you can ask about it but the story is very long and very hard to talk about as it goes roughly 3000 years in length and can cover a number of things.)

UCAF chronological data- ACCESS GRANTED

Date of admission- Published 2221- Updated 2521- Modified 2555

/Memo/ -Dr Valerie E Haley

>To those who read this chronological archive of the UCAF you may require to read the UCAF foundation records and past ICA records in order to understand this, please note that all archives were accessed and modified by me, and any confidential data seen may or may not be factual as there have been continuity issues through the UCAF archives since 2399. All data regarding specific structures and organisations will be recorded in their own separate sections, please also note that this shares archived data on past organisations and records involving the military, economic and historic events and timelines. This information must not be allowed to fall into unwarranted hands due to the sensitivity of the information.<p>

To those who read this, the future is not set, however the past is, heed this warning, and do not make the same mistakesâ€| Semper Fi.

/END/

Index Archives

Factions: Note that some may not exist while others may have disbanded

In the beginning of the new colonies of the Nova Stratus region, there were over 80 known factions in control of the region of space; throughout 2221 the UCAF recorded the 8 main power factions:

Pop: 46 billion, 890 worlds, unknown amount of systems

Imperial Arcadian Empire: The Arcadian Empire was once built over the ruins of a past race that utilised space FTL teleportation; the Arcadians decided to ignore trying to understand the super advanced technology and simply accepted it as a gift from fate. The Empire structured itself on militaristic and imperial beliefs since the early 5th century when the first Arcadians witnessed the first king travel through the gateways with his armies to ascend into godhood. It wasn't until much later that it was discovered to be a teleporter and began to spread news of the new king, and thus over 500 years the Arcadian Empire has stretched far even though not being FTL capable, it encompassed over 172 planets and 5 dozen systems by 2225.

Human Unification Organisation: This faction of power was infamous

through the Nova Stratus records as being completely immoral in practices with medicine and genetic manipulation, especially through the early 24th century. The Human Unification was a movement and ideal based on a single mind and body, not literally but metaphorically it meant to bring the human race under one banner and to bring the colonies to improve themselves by adapting their beliefs of improvement through health and genetics, their beliefs were well met, but not widely accepted. The HUO began expansion just 75 years before 2225, it reached over 93 worlds, but had severe restrictions due to non-FTL abilities, but it could communicate to other planets through a unique technological device found on their planet, this communication allowed access to dozens of worlds, but made things arduous as it took years to convince many, and those with them were not as loyal as they had yet to show themselves until 2225.

Imperial Orussian Imperium: The Imperium of the Celestial Tundra is what Orussia essentially means, the Orussians had been formed during the 8th century and continued to evolve into the state that it is, however it is unique due to its amazing bit of genetic evolution. The Orussian people originate on their world of Icarus, frozen tundra of a planet, but they live in underground super cities constructed millennia before their existence, it was said that their gods shaped and created them to do their will. The Orussian people were initially suspected to have been cloned, on closer inspection that rumour had become somewhat true, in the earliest days the ICA found that the Orussians were using an alien technology that allowed them to be cloned at nearly instant speeds, it aged the clones to a certain degree before releasing them as perfect replicas, however in the years the Orussians phased out the use of clones as there was no longer a need. Orussian space from records indicated that they possessed 123 worlds.

Independent Colonial Coalition: ICC was not only a formidable power during the early colonial era, but the fact that they had the largest coalition of planets was frightening. The ICC had formed during the late 9th century as the planet of Callistan began to advance; the Callistians had unified and advanced rapidly in technology and science putting their beliefs in religion behind for idealised morals and ethics and beliefs which suited their society. The Callistians recruited a number of neighbouring systems through talk and began to advance into modern 21st century technology by early 11th century, they had covered the areas of technology faster than that of earth, however during the period which became known as the 'colonial age' the Coalition fell apart at the seams as many new colonies wished for independence. For 400 years the ICC was engrossed in civil strife and war, and eventually it fell into a dark age of space. ICC did not reform until late 18th century and only during the 19th did it fully recover to begin again with efforts to reconnect with lost ties. The ICC first developed AI in 2101, and created cybernetics in 2021. ICC planets numbered roughly 180 worlds, however many factions that splintered decreased the numbers down to 50.

Neo Koslovic Separatists: NKS was formed about the same time the ICA was formed and was kept marginally controllable, the NKS however had many flaws in ideals and beliefs and most of the reform was half hearted corrections that worked well to suit certain colonies to join, the efforts it took the NKS to form was staggering and highly costly, the NKS did not survive with its neo communist beliefs as it died out in early 2312. Planets under NKS influence were roughly 45.

United Republic of Calisto: URC was amazingly the wealthiest faction out of the Nova Stratus factions and it was the most developed faction surpassing the ICC, but it was not as expansive as the ICC or the IAE, it took the efforts of the Calisto Strata Cluster 400 years to get to a fully developed point and the URC required to buy most of the FTL technology from the ICC when they encountered each other during the late 18th century. URC was initially 30 systems and 130 worlds but developed heavily into 80 systems and 210 worlds by the end of the 23rd century.

Arian Systems Movement: ASM was notoriously a heavy left hand fascist ruled dictatorship, Arian Molvic was an imperialist ruler who believed heavily in the strength of his people, but also his blood, he was supposed to have died during the 17th century, however with certain technology he had managed to stay alive and active, his rule had been nearly absolute, if it weren't for the many new factions which opposed him during the rise of the 19th century where the ICC and the many rebellion forces began to push forwards with a war on his rule, he was not killed until a single 4 man team infiltrated his palace and managed to slay him in 2332. Number of planets under recorded history is unknown

Independent Colonial Alliance: ICA was the foremost impressive force of Nova Stratus region because of its FTL and colonisation ability, the ICA formed in 2225 with its position on Anomia and 12 new colonies, it began to garner support over the whole region boasting new technologies from an empire far away on a planet called earth, and thus the ICA began integration in a short 25 years. It continued to expand until it was stopped by the ICC and the IAE during the late 23rd century. The ICA formed 80 worlds and moved upwards since.

Races: This must remain absolutely confidential for the security of the human race and beyond it

Fenrisson: An indigenous species connected to the world of Valence, their discovery was not made until the 15th century by ICC colonial explorer ships. The Fenris have no intentions to join the human race as they had lived in isolation for many millennia, the ICC did not attempt to force borders open and simply remained passive. The Fenris race did not join the human race until late 2400s where the planet suffered a disastrous famine caused from heat of the local star, it had a minor solar flare which lasted 3 months and destroyed over 60% of crops and caused heavy instability in the planet's ecosphere.

Timeline: 2250-2350

ICA formation in Nova Stratus was welcomed by many, the formation of the first new faction since the HUO centuries earlier, the ICA formed with the intent to bring a democratic social order and wealth to the worlds of Nova Stratus, its 110 ships and 1.1 million colonists met with the first Anomians who lived on the new capital and integrated the pre-space capable race into its own. The ICAF was later formed in 2263 in order to defend against possible raids from pirates and slavers.

ICC and the ASM began a conflict when the planet of Vekta was invaded by ASM forces, the ICC responded with a massive fleet strike and soon

the far western regions of the Nova Stratus region was engrossed in a war of attrition, it would not end until late 2341.

URC and HUO form a pact of trade in order to maximise their economic standing as the ICC colonial conflict progressed, the pact would last until the rise of the Advent order and the Imperial Vindicators of 2371.

IAE makes a calculated move to engage the ICA in the south east regions of the Nova Stratus regions, the factions face off in a heavy warzone and soon finds themselves battling on equal terms. The ICA only has the advantage of space FTL and weaponry while the IAE only possess the ability to utilise ground troops. The first conflict alerts the ICA to its fragile situation and makes the ICA council partake in a future plan to protect its space.

2350-2450

The ICC becomes united as it celebrates the victory over the ASM and the death of Arian and his rule, the support for the ICC rises and changes in power gives way for change to order. The ICC begins the next stage of development as it moves to unify the western regions of Nova Stratus.

2370 marks the beginning of change as the URC encounters a mysterious unexplored region of Nova Stratus, this isolated region reveals 64 worlds under the control of the Imperial Vindicator Order which had taken root nearly a millennia before. The IVO was formed by the ruling emperor Kisage Hotari his empire had been formed through the use of alien technology in 1250. The IVO keeps at distance until offers of trade and expansion are revealed, the IVO accepts in late 2371 when the URC offers to show them regions of recently conquered ASM systems.

ICAF begins rapid expansion across all front as helps in reconstituting the many ASM worlds, the expansion of the ICA grants it access to over 61 worlds and 30 systems, it had covered as much ground in technology as the ICC, but still did not possess a formidable military.

IAE began its intervention into the expansion of the ICA and the confrontation of the IVO, this move made the Nova Stratus region breach a tension point as the IVO found the intrusion an act of stupidity and challenged the IAE in 2375.

The First Colonial War-2375-2385

The ten year period saw to the end of minor instability as the IVO began its first major step into Nova Stratus, and its first major stride into forming the UCA, the IVO engaged in the war with no belief over pride or greed, but purely on the basis of honour. The war went through 50 systems and on 60 worlds; it totalled 18 million lives and 360 billion credits worth of reparations from the IAE to the IVO.

The ICA made contact with the IVO in 2378 and joined the war, the IVO granted the ICA access to military power and technology as well as access to the legendary Vindicator Order. It was at the end of the war that the ICA suggested a combined effort to unite the colonies and bring proper order to all factions with their assistance, there

would no longer be conflict, maybe minor apprehension to the idea, but it would work well with the IVO.

The IVO joins the ICA and forms the ICAF

Second Colonial War-2415-2445

The remnants of the IAE formed into the Neo Imperial Arcadian Empire, and begin another war, the URC step in to assist as hundreds of URC worlds are annexed and the ICC also join. The war goes for over 20 years and brings into play the advanced technologies of the ICC and the IVO creating the MKI Hayabusa powered armour variant suit. The war rages on until the Orussian military joins from its years of isolation. The war escalates with the defeat of the Arcadian Emperor, Magnus Derion on Theta Arcadia.

2450-2525

The UCA is formed in the aftermath of the SCW as the ICA no longer was capable of being independent as it had encompassed over 5 major factions of power and over 1200 planets in 2450, the UCAF begins mass expansion and colonisation up until the covenant war.

However things did not stay normal, in 2455 the UCAF was contacted by the Office of Naval Intelligence of the UNSC and was asked into aiding in possible future plans it required. The UCAF was sceptical in accepting the ONI or the UNSC as it had long since ended its ties with earth. But the role of the ONI seemed too good to ignore, the UCAF accepted the terms and conditions and integrated and formed the ONI on Anomia, Hyperion Point base.

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The birth of Valerie Haley and the initiation of Project Delta One-

2520

The preliminary stage of development of the Spartan Alpha project and the final steps of Project Delta One, the initiation of Project Rey and Forge

2525

Completion of all assigned task and programs

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/Memo/ -Aniston Grey- UCAF Rey Project Director

"To those who maybe hearing this message, I warn you about what you will hear and what you will read, this is no story of great honour or faith this was survival, and I'll be damned for those who condemn the actions we took in order to save the human race from extermination at the hands of the covenant we did not sit on our asses and do nothing, we took the war to our enemies, with fire and vigour, we shall ensure that mankind will live to see the future, even if we do not make that journey. I say this now, 'I have become death, the destroyer of worlds'."

Project Rey: The Rey project was by far the most disturbing project ever undertaken, this child known as Rey -0149 was taken as a child and then genetically cloned with a psychic membrane in his frontal lobe, his genetic augmentations were meant to keep his mind in communication with the other Rey clones, however he suffered severe trauma and went into a coma. His body was cryogenically stored and 5 more clones of him were created in order to test the psycho telepathic communications link.

The link was proven to be highly unstable as the many Rey individuals shared memories and emotions, but also their same creator, their mother. Rey then began to show signs of psychosis amongst the young group as their minds drifted into the mind of Rey-0149 and began to relive dead memories; the ONI took action to sever the link and begins a neuro-telepathic connection to a quantum core in order to avoid any future incidents.

The units after the connection began to act normally passive and engrossed in training, their controlled belief was to die serving and then to end up with their creator in the afterlife, or the quantum core in which their fragmented existence is sent to after their initial deaths, however there was a severe down side to this adaptation, the neural link made the effect of one of the units dying and sent a psycho impulse to all other units warning them of their brothers deaths and making them relieve their deaths inside their own minds. The ONI did nothing to subdue the effects and observed intent on figuring out the working mind of the young Rey clones.

Project Alpha: "They show greater promise than that of Orion, and they show much to be offered to save humanity, it is a cruel truism that I must do this in order to save lives by destroying theirs, but it is a necessary evil that is inexcusable and for what may come I shall eventually pay for it, but till then they are my children, my legacy to humanity for better or for worse, the judgement is made by us as humans to decide upon it. I did what I believed was right, even when they suffered; I did it because it was necessary. Mind, body and soul" Valerie Haley 2525- A Choice page223

Project Alpha was named in the alpha stages of the Spartan program; it was formed after the failure of Orion and was then used as a template to test the gene-enhancements for the SPII program, Alpha was made in order to ensure that the SPII did not fail, however there were substantial differences in the two programs, the UCAF had funded enough to have 750 candidates aside from the 75 that the UNSC could only afford, the reason being was due to the sheer amount of resources available by the UCAF and the number of highly related gene-strands of precursor DNA that was in the human race in the Nova Stratus region as many humans had been originally altered by the forerunners.

The UCAF had all candidates tested and evaluated over the period of 6 years had had them all take a 3 step initiative into becoming Spartans, the fact remained that some of the chemicals and procedures were far too deadly to perform all at once and it was advised to the ONI that doing so would kill the subjects faster, the process taken by Valerie Haley proved the best option as the program had plenty of time.

The program proved fruitful if not somewhat gruelling, the program produced 690 available Spartans from the 6 year training program and

it was less suspicious as to the SPII program, many children were selected from orphanages and certain locations, there was also the fact that those children taken from families were either compliant or unaware of the circumstances involved with their children. The Alpha project moved swiftly and deftly through to the final stages without flaw.

And the program reached its intended goal by the end of 2524 to begin the Ascent Program.

Project Ascent: The Ascent was meant as an inspiration to the new generation at the beginning of 2525, the program was to provide the new powered armour of the UCAF to the Spartans, and it was also to provide Project Rey with the advanced combat skeletons which had been in secret development in the Prodigal System from early 2520. The MKIII series armour was an early prototype suit required to be piloted by a single Spartan occupant, it was a streamlined variant that shaped exactly to that of their bodies, the only flaw was that the suits had bulky designs and irregular joints, it was based off of the Powered Armour of the Vindicators Order, but had to be adapted with the EOD from the Union Specialists program in order to compensate for the lack of shielding from possible enemy fire.

The Ascent Project also featured the research of the MVF-01 series suits, the Mobile Versatile Frames were made as an external support force for the Spartans, it possessed the firepower that the Spartans lacked as well as the shielding, but it could not create a body shield only a bubble area of effect shield. The MVF was first seen in use in the Prodigal system in the first month of the war, there were records that indicated further use, and then afterwards the suits became obsolete during the fall of 2535 when the Mobile Suit program took place.

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Military branches:

Helldivers: The elite and lethal Helldivers were introduced in 2370 by the ICAF adapted from the original ODST branch of the UNSC; the helldivers were created to be as deadly and as efficient as the ODST. However the helldivers worked as spearhead and assault forces for the majority of the war, and were used in almost every battle/campaign. The helldivers are consisted of teenagers who enlist from specialist cores of the UCAF military academies and are voluntary. However others join for many varying reasons. The helldivers have a history of having members who are unstable or emotionally distressed, it is uncommon to have too many psychologically effected marines, however many are overlooked because of their skills and experience.

The helldivers reputation is never taken lightly, especially by the elites of the covenant, the recorded battles between the elites and the helldivers had become something of myths to the covenant.

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Pop: 76 billion, 1780 worlds, 1500+ systems

Timeline-2525-2555

2525- January

UCAF troops are moved to the Prodigal and Haven's Gate, suspicion to many beliefs that there would be an expedition into the further reaches of space garner much support and thus masks the hidden agenda of the UCAF HIGH COM in its pursuit of hiding the truth of the situation.

Spartan Alpha is moved to Haven 2 days later and begins the final armament procedure before they reach Seti Etha.

Prodigal final checks completed and all MVFs had been fully prepared, only 1 capable pilot is used in the program and is set out to test in field.

5th of January brings the heralds of unknown contacts in orbit over the Haven System, the UCAF respond by attempting communication, the reply is. "_Your destruction is the will of the gods, and we are their instruments."_ UCAF engages in space combat, the UCAF fleets are heavily armed and manage to fend the covenant off from taking the planet on several occasions; however planet side operations revealed heavy combat and action on the planet.

UCAF marine Mitchel Walker of the Marauders independent division is called in from his previous station in orbit aboard a UCAF cruiser to help in a classified mission.

18th of January the Spartan arrive on Prodigal Eta and encounters the Rey program and Dr Haley, the Dr requires to give all Spartans the armour Ascent units and then asks for assistance in evacuating all Rey units to escape craft in order to continue program, Rey Unit 201 is left behind and ordered to self-destruct once all UCAF ships escape, the unit complies and is killed in action, the first clone casualty of the war.

21st of January, Major Mitchel arrives in the Eastern Verge, he is ordered to aid in the location of a special forerunner beacon and is tasked in retrieving the technology to be sent to ONI Section III, his mission soon spirals out of control as the facility he enters is infested with a hostile parasitic entity known as the flood, his platoon is wiped out shortly and he and 3 others manage to reach the safety of the main complex, however surrounded by the flood and the covenant he soon finds no other option aside from sending the message and ending the facility, he activates a quantum purge inside the station core and sucks the station into oblivion with the flood and the covenant.

Through the rest of the year, the covenant press to engage the UCAF, battles prove to be highly costly on both sides as they are nearly equally matched, the covenant fleet masters agree to bring forth their finest commander, grand fleet overseer Tol'ree Moteree, the devised operation heralds the name of the first exalted crusade.

2526-2531

The UCAF lose over 200 light years and over 400 planets are either destroyed or rendered lifeless, more than 8 billion die within less than 5 years and over 1.9 billion soldiers of the marauders and

reserve forces. The UCAF initiate military protocol and command, all military academies were to provide youths with military mandatory classes and training, all colonies were to have an immediate defence force in order to stop any chances of the colony's demise.

The UCAF military standing was at roughly 3 billion, with 175,000 available warships and vessels.

Spartan Beta begins the recruitment of more than 1500 new Spartans and advanced MKIV armour is placed into production.

2531-2540

UCAF casualties mount as the war progresses, the UCAF colonies are cut nearly finely in half at the middle of the Nova Stratus region, 490 light years had been lost, 29 billion had been killed and a million youth a day were being killed to fight the enemy covenant on the front lines. Child soldiers from ages up to 12-17 were being recruited near combat zones and guerrilla fighting becomes fierce in the region of the now known dead zone, the Daedalus Crusades.

2535 sees the change in the war as the MS program takes hold in the western regions and the eastern flanks, the UCAF begin a massive counter offensive using MS units. The war takes a significant turn, as also the UCAF brings forth the many new Spartan troops, the Beta program brings out over 2000 troops into the war and begins mass escalation in the war.

2539 brings out the covenant's own MS program to bear and the war begins to stagnate once more, the UCAF finds itself at a kill to death ratio of 1:7, the UCAF only suffering 1 for almost every 7 of the covenant's own. The war continues as it had until 2545

2540-2551

UCAF begins the slow build up till operation Overlord to which the UCAF would spearhead a massive attack upon the covenant planetoid to kill and wipe out the hierarchs of Divine Resolve, the Spartans receive further upgrades and new forces appear. Covenant renegades begin to harbour support and the war takes a turn for change.

2545 brings into motion the massive assault, the UCAF bring to bear over 11,000 ships upon one of the 4 command planetoids of the covenant, the mass assault breaks the covenant grasp in a major sector and kills one of the prophets. Another flees into the depths of space and is pursued by the UCAF Spartan team Sigma.

Sigma encounters a forerunner planet in the unknown regions of Nova Stratus; the planet of Reverence's Grace is discovered. UCAF forces engage in battle with the covenant, and also locate the forerunner known as the Inheritor, his revelation of the human race and the forerunners changes the beliefs of the prophet of Amity who seeks to change the covenant, Amity vanishes from the Nova Stratus region and takes with him his most loyal troops in order to reform the covenant.

The prophet of Reverence takes his forces and steals the location to a forerunner ultra-dreadnought and begins to hunt for its location, the UCAF soon follow behind to deal with the rogue covenant leader

and the covenant forces soon fall into civil war. All 3 planetoids are isolated however their forces manage to build a heavy resistance to the UCAF approach and the UCAF wait until the end of the hunt for the rogue prophet in order to regroup.

2550 the final battle rages after the discovery of the dreadnought Light of Grace, Himitsuki and his fellow Spartans of the specialist division of Alpha fight the covenant and the flood in the region and successfully eliminates the prophet and destroys the dreadnought in the process, Himitsuki and his forces are reported as MIA.

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(Start hereâ€|)

2551/7/3: UCAF Operation: Aurora Cascade

Aurora Cascade was planned just prior to the destruction of the forerunner super dreadnought, the massive scale attack upon the covenant was to eliminate the stronghold of each major population of covenant forces and force the covenant into withdrawing or scattering into the pockets rather than concentrated forces.

The attack began in June, but the operation had come at a high cost, colonies within surrounding regions had felt the effects as the covenant scattered in all directions, many hitting small isolated colonies in the Nova Stratus region which had been widely ignored until the operation. The UCAF immediately reacted by deploying forces to counter the splinter forces, however the attacks continued even with the presence of the UCAF fleets and security.

In one Segment of UCAF space, the 445th support fleet engaged the covenant in a heavily contested system. The fleet mainly consisted of reserve vessels manned mostly by young officers and new crewmen; each crewman was trained but not experienced. That changed when they engaged the covenant, the following battle ripped through the system like wildfire as Magnetic Accelerators and Plasma Projectors ripped through the blackness of space.

Golden eruptions of light covered the length of the void like newly blossoming stars; from the far end of the system the UCAF engagement had lifted to evacuate the colony of people. As much as the covenant was trying to stop the evacuating ships, the UCAF continued to retaliate to cover the colonial vessels.

As the last of the vessels took off into a portal of light that was slip-space the UCAF vessels began their standard withdrawal of dispersion missiles and torpedoes. The dozens of support vessels scattered into slip-space with the covenant closely pursuing. One of these vessels was a heavily armoured UCAF Iron Clad class Corvette.

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UCAF Corvette- Iron Wright

Alarms rang across the ship as the corvette shook violently, crewmen ran to their stations trying to monitor the situation as the vessel continued to push forwards into the depths of slip-space. The ship's

shields were about to give out from the indicators across the vessel, crewmen prepared for an emergency transition out from slip-space while others headed to combat stations.

In the lower hold of the ship, marines jumped into their standby stations, if the alarms were right it was either fight or flight, but a corvette against a covenant destroyer would be outmatched. Marines jumped into pods and others prepared for a mid-transition drop, the marines would be tossed into slip-space to ensure that they survived to fight another day.

It was a risky move but better than them being killed aboard a ship, they'll give the covenant hell later on. As the alarms finally hit emergency stations, the marines rushed even faster into their pods and others into lifeboats. The ship took blows to the hull, breaches began to appear across the vessel, and the commander in charge of the ship ordered all personnel to abandon ship. The first were the pods, as the marines had slip-space capable pods, they'd be able to make a safe trip while the ship was too slow to exit slip-space.

In those pods, the marines braced as they were ejected one by one into slip-space. Emergency supply pods and equipment were dumped as well, once they left the ship continued on as it took fire, the commander had ensured that those who survived would be able to survive. Hopefully surviveâ€¦|

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Region near the Verde Strata

Planet: Unknown

Continent: Equestria

Time: 7:20 PM

Upon a golden throne held above upon a regal platform, one of the rulers of this beautiful kingdom sat upon her throne, she listened patiently to another noble finish his constant droning of taxes on housing in Equestria and the land value of places in Manehattan and Trottingham. If it wasn't for the fact that she had been upon this throne for the past 1000 years, dealing with the nobles and corporate big wigs, she'd have just said. 'I don't careâ€¦|' But no, she didn't be rude to her subjects, even if they were a literal pain in the ass.

Her pastel skin smooth and regal as ever, the long flowing hair of the princess glimmered gently in a non-existent breeze. The feminine figure of the ruler was interesting, she had wings that sat tucked behind her, and she couldn't stretch them at the moment. She also had a long and sharp looking horn protruding from her forehead. These features were enhanced as the princess's own figure was nearly glowing, slender hands and feet, elegant and refined. She wore a tight fitting set of leggings which were the colour of her skin and a tube top stylized with her cutie mark, and she had silken elbow length gloves. This was princess Celestia, the regent of the sun and second ruler of the kingdom of Equestria.

She had spent most of her day in court, listening to the nobles and politicians and other people come and go with arguments and

discussions and news and plans and projects all vying for her attention and recognition. She hadn't much else to do, and Luna her sister was busy in her room researching the skies and catching up on Equestrian history, not to mention searching through archives on space.

Celestia in her mind smiled at the thought, her sister was catching up with the world and soon she would, and the sooner the better, having all these nobles to deal with her by herself was a bit of a pain in her flank. She listened for another 10 minutes with her poker face continually in play, in truth she stopped listening about 30 minutes before and was just picking out what the male stallion was saying.

The stallion finally finished and asked.

>"Your highness, you must understand that another loss in the financial district cannot be afforded, as soon as a new stimulus can be provided, will help the flailing businesses to recover from bad economic turn outs for a period for them to recover."<p>

"That's understandable Mr Calculus, however, I feel that it is necessary to remind you, that our spending in the financial district was the very reason that those businesses are in trouble, at the moment I'd have to attend a meeting with the treasurer before addressing this situation as a critical stimulus may just cause further problems." She replied aptly.

The stallion acknowledged and thanked her for her time, he left and the court finally closed. Celestia sighed; she could have had a better day looking at the clouds pass overhead rather than another 9 chains of corporates going at her about the economy. She stood up at full height 6ft5 and yawned. She walked down and out of the throne room and to her room passing her guards who bowed respectfully to her; she acknowledged them and continued on.

It was as she reached the doors to her room that she was suddenly surprised to see.

>"TIA! I need to speak with you!" Luna said as she entered into the room.<p>

Celestia almost stumbled backwards from the outburst of Luna and asked in confusion.

>"What's happened?"<p>

"There's something happening, and I can feel it, we must head to observatory right now!" Luna urged uncertainly.

Celestia hadn't had such a conversation since when Discord appeared and Luna was nervous about what the fate of their world would be. Celestia decided to agree and go with her; if it was urgent then it was something she'd deal with straight away. Never make the same mistake twice, in the case of what had occurred 1 thousand years before.

The regal pastel alicorn followed her dear sister away to the observatory that was Luna's private room. Luna was in regards to Celestia, the most cherished thing in the world, right next to Twilight Sparkle and so many of her students and 'children'. Luna was family though and someone she had failed to save one time before, in a debacle that almost destroyed the planet.

Luna was a bit below Celestia's height at 5ft9; she had a deep navy coloured skin with a patch of her flank with spots of black and her cutie mark of a crescent moon. Her hair was a beautiful mix of gaseous stars that flowed in a wavy manner much like Celestia's. Luna had a horn similar to Celestia's and wings, not fully matured, as she had only recently returned from freeing herself from Nightmare Moon.

Luna wore a pair of wrist braces which were silver and marked with her cutie mark; she had a pair of fingerless gloves on which showed her beautiful smooth hands. Her backless shirt was a little lighter than her skin, and she wore a satin short skirt which went up to her knees. She had a posture a little less to that of Celestia's considering her years of isolation without any pony to speak to nor rule over so it made sense that she hadn't adapted the same sort of attitude with ruling the kingdom. Celestia had to remember to start teaching her more on public addresses.

Upon reaching the spire where the observatory was, they entered into Luna's room, Celestia found that the room was indeed looking rather interesting, considering she hadn't remembered putting that much in here when she gave the room to Luna. She could feel the rolling of dear Stargazer in her tomb from the mess that Luna caused.

She smiled at the thought of her old friend and put focus upon what Luna was trying to tell her. She followed Luna to a book stand where she began to toss a couple of books around trying to search for the one she needed. Celestia looked around at the room, Luna had been busy in short time, but what caught her eyes were the amount of maps and strange pictures of swirling light and meteor showers.

Her thoughts were interrupted as Luna yelled.
>"Ah ha, here it is!"<p>

Celestia looked at what Luna was holding, it was a grey book with a number of constellations on the front cover, and it was written by Stargazer. Celestia perplexed, Stargazer was known for was her theories of space and the many theories of anomalies and what might be in space, but that was about 250 years ago. Today Equestrian scientists had discovered a number of new things, such as the constellations and the distance of stars in the night skies and still confusing theories as to why the planet doesn't seem to move by itself.

But the ideas of Stargazer were long forgotten, they had either been proven or disproved, there wasn't much left for researchers to look into even with their best pony Hawking thinking through the levels of space that might be out there. Luna flipped through the book and went to the telescope and said.

>"Tia you need to see this."<p>

Celestia went over to the telescope as Luna adjusted it for her and gave her the book on which page she found. She looked at it and wondered what it was, the book stated.

>Inversion- Subspace riftsâ€|<p>

When an object or mass moves fast enough it creates a field around itself and begins to rupture space, it dives and skims into a level of space called subspace, see page.332. This field of subspace

however is different as once the object immerses itself it isn't entirely stable, as once observed an object believed to come out of subspace at velocities that ripped apart a comet 650CE (Classical Era).

It is hard to determine how subspace works, but I intend to keep this theory as a possible record on what it might be. Please note that if subspace fields occur, look for a mass accelerating into a swirl of light, or an object that begins to pull itself out of some sort of rift, it may take some time as an object can vary in effect of subspace.

Celestia looked over the small section of the book and was just perplexed.

>"You're trying to tell me that there's a subspace rift?" Celestia asked.<p>

Luna looked at her with a mix of bemuse and uncertainty, she replied.

>"Yes, but I wasn't too sure if that was it, the location of the rift is located in low orbit over the planet. If you need evidence then look here." She gestured to the telescope.<p>

Celestia wasn't a pessimist and neither too optimistic, she was rather in between, unless there was enough evidence for her to have faith in. She looked in and inside hoped that Luna might be right, and what she saw was rather impressive. A number of small swirling bits of light were in orbit, they would probably hurt to look at too long, but from what she could tell the swirling bits of light weren't moving and they were no illusion. Those were definitely matching the description of what Stargazer had written; the only thing was that nothing had yet to exit.

"Well I can't say for sure, but that has to be a rift, nothing else would make much sense, the light, but I do have to admit that whatever might be coming doesn't seem to be large. But whatever it is, it broke the speed of light, and managed to immerse itself into subspace. Do you think this is worth tracking Tia?" Luna asked.

Celestia wasn't sure, Stargazer had seen many things, and of course some of them were real others were still theoretical and a few were disproven. Celestia could feel something from that anomaly; she decided it was worth the wait.

>"Yes, but I would have rather alerted the Equestrian Astrological Society first Luna, they maybe more savvy as to the circumstances of the anomaly. But I do believe that this is something important if it is a rift."<p>

Luna seemed to brighten up a bit at her sister's opinion. "Thank you Tia, I'll send for the society in the morning." She replied.

"Very well sister, do please be careful on your observations, Stargazer had a bit of a habit of ignoring some discrepancies in her findings and ended up with an array of responses and theories which took years to solve." Celestia joked before hugging her sister good night.

Celestia departed keeping her eyes on the skies; the faint glow of the rift was visible if barely, she guessed she and Luna would have

to investigate further on the subject once they rested.

XXXXXX

That night the strange light in the skies brightened as it intensified, only one pony was aside from Luna was watching the skies that night. Down in the small laid back town of Ponyville, inside of a large magical tree home a single unicorn mare watched the strange light with curiosity and excited interest.

She had a smooth lavender skin with long purple hair with a stripe of pink and purple eyes; her horn was slender and not as long as that of any other unicorn. She wore a pair of pants which stuck close to her form and had a sleeveless shirt on which also hugged to her form rather comfortably. The mare observed from her telescope the beauty of the night but more intently the anomaly she had discovered in the records of Stargazer the dreamer.

That was what Stargazer had identified as an anomaly of space, when an object pierces subspace with mass and generates its own subspace field and then dives into the unknown, or so the theory went. Ponies could one day do the same with their own technology and be able to travel the stars in such a manner, but that day would still be a fair ways off, ponies had only just gotten into the advancement of the computer and the internet.

And TV had been around for just 50 years, the age of technology was slowly coming around, and ponies were finding that magic couldn't always solve problems. Earth ponies wanted to be able to fly so they invented airplanes, then when they couldn't swim they made boats, and now they wanted to communicate by some other means they made the radio and telephone and now the internet. Carriages had gone out of fashion in some years, except in Ponyville and Trottingham, the airplane couldn't land on Pegasi constructed cities and places so it was still a WIP and technological innovations in communication were hard pressed for adjustments for cities and rural regions. There was still so much to discover and so much to do and so little time, Twilight hoped that ponykind doesn't forget its most valued roots.

Friendship was still around and ponies were happily getting along, the Griffon Clans had been slowly phasing out over the years, and old dragons were becoming rather rare sights nowadays. Spike being one of the few young dragons out and about had been rather interesting in becoming a new guardian for the dragons, once he got of age in about 400 years.

Speaking of which, the young dragon was asleep in his bed. Spike had grown a little bit in the past 3 years, he was about her stomach height now and getting bigger, soon enough he'd be able to sleep in the guest bed or with her. Twilight turned her attention back to the night skies once more, curiosity seemed to edge its way into her mind. What was coming?

She observed carefully at the light and watched until something did happenâ€¦

XXXXXX

(And that breaks the moment folks, I got to get back to work on some

other stories and a few requests I do hope you've all enjoyed this first chapter into this new story and yes, they are anthro and I do think more humanized but I'm not too sure. I'd advise you that if you know of Slugbox the artist, then you'll get the idea where I had conceived the pony characters human forms from, but used a more sensible means of dressing them. I dunno, I'm not into fashion, so I need a list of clothes to help me understand what exactly I'm trying to say. So if someone can help me with that, I'll really appreciate that.)

On another note, this new story is intended to be more drama, a little bit of action and more into what contrasts there are to that of the UCAF universe I've built for my original universe, it's on and the link is at the very beginning. I'll see what else I can do for this fic, so see you all around.

2. Chapter 2

CH2

Unprecedented Contact

XXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: Unknown

Life support: Maximum

HEV-Javelin: Status: Stable

Dean held himself inside his HEV Javelin as it began its trip through the depths of slip-space, it rocked slightly from side to side as it jumped eddies and rifts around the expanse that was subspace, the pod would have come apart from the seams if it wasn't for the stable field it was producing. Dean had thanked that the UCAF science teams had invented emergency systems for these pods in slip-space, the only problem was that the pods would travel without direction, making slip-space travel rather hard with HEVs.

Usually a marine would go into stasis to be found later, their active signals could reach a UCAF outpost nearby and they'd send a recovery fleet out to get them. Unless of course the individual's life pod was outside the range of UCAF space, then that individual would probably have to wait a few months before a ship would ever be dispatched to look for them.

Dean hoped that the latter would never have to happen as he'd be trapped inside stasis for a long time. But for now, he navigated the realm of slip-space by the energy available in the pod, he needed to find and exit in the depths of subspace and then exit from there. He could wait for a team to find him afterwards.

As he pressed on his TAC pad to where his pod's trajectory for an exit was, he found it by chance. The pod smacked directly into what one would call a rift, when the pull of slip-space opens up near a source of immense energy. Dean guessed that it must be close to a dying star, or high ion concentrations, he braced for the early drop

and prepared his beacon, if worse came to worse he'd at least have time to think.

XXXXXX

Planet: Unknown

Continent: Equestria

Location: Ponyville Library

Time: 3:20 AM

Twilight looked on at the anomaly and watched it periodically as she did, she went to go get some coffee and come back and looked again, and it hadn't changed. She sipped her coffee and wrote down some notes on what might the object be and why the anomaly was here, she found little evidence to suggest anything solid aside from the object being possibly capable of piercing subspace.

She sighed and then went back to drinking a little more, she waited for a bit until she noticed something, above there was a small shimmer in the night skies just bright enough to get some ponies attention should they have been watching. Twilight saw the ripple and looked again, she had found the anomaly gone, and in its place seemed to be something else. She focused her enchanted telescope to look at the object.

But instead of one object, she found over 3 dozen objects of varying sizes; they scattered above the night skies over Equestria and headed downwards to the planet. Twilight practically flew about writing down what she was seeing. She observed the objects as they began their descent to the world, some of them started to trail heat as they burned up in the atmosphere. But a majority of the objects were still going down to the earth at tremendous speeds.

She suspected that they might be travelling as fast as Mach 3, or even faster than Rainbow Dash's Sonic Rainboom, if so then that would explain the trails of heat coming off of them, they weren't made to travel that fast, or were they? She had a sneaking suspicion that those objects weren't normal, but she couldn't see them properly from where she was.

The closest one she tracked was a single object, possibly no bigger than a car, which was still frightening as it looked as if it would hit something near Ponyville. The object raced to the ground at tremendous speeds and cooled the trailing tail of fire as it got closer; Twilight went straight from writing to just observing the time of arrival of the object.

It got close enough that she didn't even need to look out of her telescope to see the thing come down, it blazed a trail straight towards Whitetail Woods, but what seemed odd about the trajectory was that it was slowing down as it got closer. What was that object? Twilight felt a bit curious, and she knew that it had gotten her into trouble a few times in the past.

But when she saw it land, it made a heavy thud, like lightning or cannon shot, the shockwave was light considering the size of the object, a few dogs barked, but most of Ponyville remained asleep.

Spike wasn't even awakened by the impact, but that would probably be because he was a heavy sleeper. Twilight looked out to Whitetail woods, she could see a small trail of smoke or dust coming from the site of impact.

Her curiosity was telling her to go see what it was, and her smarts were telling her to send a message. But she didn't want to wake up Spike and she would rather go out and look for a bit on what the object might be, but instead she came up with a solution. She wrote down a message on a piece of parchment for Celestia of her findings and she left a note to Spike to make sure to send it in case she didn't come back after morning. She could have sent an E-mail, but she knew that Celestia was a tad slow on using technology for certain things, so for Spike it would be more direct.

She left the message next to Spike and set the alarm to exactly 6:00 and then went and packed a few things, such as a Geiger-counter spell, a pair of glasses, and a magic kit on first aid. She took her essentials and hurried out the front door. The night breeze was chilly but not as bad as winter or autumn, thankfully it was early summer.

She headed to Whitetail woods, prepared for adventure and whatever might be there waiting for her.

XXXXX

Location: Canterlot

Stargaze Spire Observatory

Luna watched the same spectacle as Twilight and went to work furiously, she didn't know what to do, this was happening so suddenly and it was just past 3! She had to call in so many damage control teams, and scientists, and guards to secure the landing sites for the objects. She hurried about writing all of this down and going over to what the ponies called telephones and contacted medical ponies to be on standby for the recovery.

She then hurried off to gather some equipment, and then she teleported straight to Celestia. Of course that wasn't as easy as it would seem, Celestia hated it when somepony interrupts her sleep and years of incidents with students and magical teleportation have taught her about getting into her room without expressed permission.

She had the area of her room completely sealed with a defensive spell to stop teleporting inside; Luna ended up just outside the door to her sister's room and began to knock furiously.

>"Tia! Open up, something's happened!" Luna shouted.<p>

It took about another half a dozen knocks until Celestia crawled from her bed and finally answered the door with a very annoyed look.

>"Luna it is 3 in the morning and I know that you might enjoy the night a tad bit more than me, but please couldn't this wait until 6?" She asked slightly tiredly.<p>

"No, and for a good reason, sister, the rift in the sky finished its transition and they closed up." Luna began.

>"Oh good, at least you recorded the events for ponies to look at later." Celestia mumbled.
"No you don't understand is that something, or should I say many things have exited from the rifts and have landed on Equestria and surrounding regions." Luna finished.

Celestia then took things more seriously.

>"Okay now that does sound very concerning. How many objects did you observe?" She asked.<p>

"There were about 36, but a few burnt up on re-entry, I counted at least 30 which landed around the area, a few of them landed close by. One possibly near Manehattan and another near Hasting, I called the guards of each region to secure the sites and make sure that no pony approached them until we arrived." Luna replied urgently.

"Did any pony report going near any of those sites?" Celestia asked.

"No, but we need to hurry and go and see what those impacts were, I alerted the Equestrian Astrological Society a few minutes ago, they'd send out teams to help investigate on what landed." Luna finished.

"Very well it looks like we're going to have a long night ahead of us. We better get moving to Manehattan first, I don't think any pony should be exposed to what might be found there." Celestia said.

Luna nodded and waited as Celestia dressed herself quickly. The two sisters then teleported as close to the sight as possible, they'd have to go and make sure that everything was secure and move the items if possible back to Canterlot.

XXXXXX

Location: Whitetail Woods

Twilight carefully made her way through the darkness around her, it wasn't too hard to make out what was around her, and the night skies helped brighten some parts of the forest. The gloom around her was patchy as she headed towards the object, she could hear animals running from the area and birds chirping loudly.

She found her way to the site after trekking through the depths of the forest for just over an hour, it wasn't too deep in the forest but it was a pain to keep moving without accidentally tripping or falling. She poked around as she finally reached an embankment of a small pond, or what was once a pond, she could smell heavy steam in the air as she got closer, her vision was slightly foggy as she made her way over to the edge of the pond.

The unicorn used her magic and cleared some of the fog from her eyes and was given a rather interesting surprise, the object was here and it wasn't like that of something like a rock, it was a solid shape with edges and angles that looked like it was manufactured. But what made it really noticeable was that it wasn't oblong it was sharp.

The tip of the object was pointed sharply downwards, and the sides had what she'd assume were airbrakes. The mare carefully observed

ever more closely the object's shape, the top was flat except for some type of parachute compartment, the chute though was metal and it was hanging off on top of a tree nearby.

Twilight carefully pulled out her Geiger counter spell and began to sweep the area; she found no high traces of radiation from anywhere, normal background ones coming from the object, but nothing that indicated danger to her body and health. She relaxed a bit, no chances of her being hurt from anything.

She went over to the object and began to observe it closely; it had cooled enough that she could put her hand on places. When she ran her hand over some seams of the object she noticed that it had bolts and what looked like hinges in positions. She poked a finger at one of the hinges and pulled at the bolts, they seemed pony made objects, but what would a pony made object be doing in subspace?

She got her answer when she found a small side panel; it was steaming hot from the boiling water that was on it. She dared not to touch it, she remembered that she had magic and began to pull with her magic upon the panel and found a trigger; it was red and had a warning sign, a person standing away from the door with a trigger in its hand.

She didn't need to be a genius to know that meant to grab the trigger and get clear when she pulled it. At first she didn't know if this was smart, being near a strange box which might contain anything, but if the signs indicated anything, it was that the object was made by sentients, so it couldn't be bad could it?

Her curiosity took over her as she went and grabbed the trigger and pulled it away from the pod and moved it to her side and went a good 2 meters from the object and then paused. She thought about what she was going to do. But nothing ventured, nothing gained.

She pressed the trigger and then pulled her head down as the sound of something exploding ringed in her ear; she looked up and saw what had happened, the front had popped clean open revealing something inside. She hurried from her position and got over to the object and found what her curiosity had led her to, which almost made her scream in fright.

Inside the object there was an armoured behemoth, well not that big, but still bigger than her and probably a fully grown stallion, it might as well be a walking metal giant. The being inside or possibly machine was resting; it was fully covered in armour, and had markings of white scratches on its armour. There was also what seemed like an array of weapons, she had seen pictures of old firearms and some more recent weapons of the Equestrian military.

But none of that compared to what this being had in its possession, it had what looked like a massive rifle with more than 2 or 3 barrels, and there were numerous canisters and objects which seemed to fit into the barrel of the weapon. She could only imagine that this thing might be a war machine of sorts. But it wasn't moving, it remained still.

She carefully observed each bit of the being. It had an angular helmet which had some wires or cables sticking at the back, and some added bits to the helmet. The neck was also V shaped and had multiple

layers of what looked like plastic. The neck brace was metal, and the front chest plate was large, it bulked outwards with plenty of things on top of it, it had some sort of indicator as well. It glowed deep red with a single bar being green, whatever it meant.

She found herself fascinated by the thing; she spent some more time going over the object until something happened. A booming voice stopped her there and lights flashed on and blinded her as someone yelled.

>"You there, this is a restricted area, you will be detained for trespassing in a live quarantine zone, now remain where you are. Or we will use force!"<p>

Twilight was frightened, she almost thought that it was this thing's friends when she realised that it was a royal guard with dozens of regular military personnel rushing in to secure the sight. From behind ponies gathered stretchers and equipment and moved forwards, a few went over and grabbed Twilight.

She shouted and screamed.

>"Wait, I'm the princess' protÃ©gÃ©!"<p>

"Likely story ma'am, now stop struggling so we can decontaminate you and process your detainment, you have the right to remain silent." A regular said pinning her with his arms.

That was when someone else arrived on the scene and asked. "What is going on here?" The voice sounded very familiar to Twilight, and she saw who it was as the regular backed away and other ponies bowed respectfully or as diligently as they could.

"Princess Celestia?" She called.

The regal alicorn princess stepped forwards from the light with another alicorn which Twilight identified as Princess Luna. Celestia was startled to find her student here of all places.

>"Twilight, what are you doing here?" She asked with confusion.<p>

Twilight got up and explained.

>"I was out investigating a crash earlier this night when I was observing a strange anomaly in the night skies; I thought it was important that I checked here, I didn't know that you received my message."<p>

"What message? I was awoken by Luna when she observed the same event, I was intending to tell you in the morning." She perplexed.

"That's exactly what I was also going to do." Twilight said.

"Well may I be so bold as to ask, but what did you do to that pod over there?" Luna asked.

Twilight remembered the being in the pod and noted that Luna was pointing at the immobile entity. She replied.

>"I was investigating the object and found a panel to open the object, that thing inside is either unconscious or dead, I don't know." Twilight replied.<p>

"Ah well it looks like we might actually have caught a break this

time, Dr Cutter and Heath please go and remove the entity carefully, we don't need to lose another in the light of tonight's events." Celestia said to a pair of unicorns and their team members.

The ponies nodded and hurried over in hazard suits and heat suits to begin removing the pod from the ground. Twilight hurried over to Celestia's side and asked.

>"What's going on?"<p>

"The science teams believe that they can safely remove the entity inside without causing damage, as we had some serious issues with other ones like this." Celestia replied.

"Wait; there are more of these things?" Twilight exclaimed.

Luna decided to intervene with a stern look about what they had to know.

>"Yes, but now is not the time or place Twilight, we need to move this one as soon as possible. I must attend to some important duties in the meantime, there were reports of them crashing as far as Stalliongrad and I have been in need there. Luna will deal with removing this one. And she will fill you in on the details later, at the moment you have to keep this quiet. Luna and I will gather you and the other elements of harmony as soon as possible. Please keep this quiet." Celestia asked.<p>

"Of course Princess." Twilight replied before Celestia vanished in a flash of light.

Luna went over to her and said.

>"So we meet again Twilight, it's been sometime since we last spoke hasn't it?"<p>

"Yes princess it has, so when did you find out about the rift in the night skies?" Twilight inquired.

"Yesterday night, and I followed on with it till this late afternoon when I told Tia, I presume you did the same?" Luna asked.

"Yes, but I spent most of this night going into it with more detail. And I also planned to alert Celestia when the need arose." She replied curtly.

"Great minds think alike." Luna thought out aloud.

Twilight nodded. It was then she asked.

>"Princess, do you know what will happen to the being?" She gestured to the still form inside the pod.<p>

"It will be taken back to Canterlot Research Centre; they have the best equipment in all of Equestria in dealing with analysis of foreign objects. And the security of Canterlot would be sufficient should the need arise to contain the being." Luna replied.

Twilight understood, the being was impressive; it was as tall as either sister and probably could be stronger. It was understandable that the princesses would want it secured from public eyes. Twilight waited for a while as the ponies moved the pod away from the site. Luna then addressed Twilight directly.

>"Twilight, I know that it's been a long night, and you're probably

tired. I'll have a dispatch of guard's take you back to Ponyville, but I must ask you, please keep this discovery quiet." Luna asked.<p>

"Not even my friends?" Twilight asked.

"Not even for them, this must be kept quiet until further investigation, in 3 days or so, Celestia and I will send for an escort of guards to take you from Ponyville to Canterlot, you may inform them that their questions into what you may have seen be answered then, no earlier. As this is a sensitive situation, I must ask you also to accept this." Luna handed her a bracelet with a mark of the sisters.

"It's an enchanted bracelet that will suppress any means of talking of the information that you have seen, I've passed it to all members of the research and guards as part of the investigation, and as you have been witness to this anomaly as well. I must ask you to relinquish speaking of the events." Luna explained.

Twilight didn't like it, but she hadn't much of a choice, Luna was cautious and she did trust the princesses, she just hoped that she wouldn't have to lie to the others in the event. She accepted the bracelet and attached it carefully to her wrists. Once on the bracelets glowed softly in the night. Luna called some guards over to get Twilight back to Ponyville.

>"It has been nice to see you again Twilight Sparkle, I do hope we get the chance to work on this discovery together."<p>

With that Twilight was let aboard a chariot and was off back to Ponyville, it was just as the dawn began to glimmer over the far horizon, she had spent the whole night. She was probably going to have to tell the girls of her findings and make sure that they've gotten themselves prepared for what was going to happen.

XXXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: 4:50 AM

At the sight of another crash hidden deep beneath the canopy of a jungle, a metal pod hung from the top of a tree embedded deeply into the side of the trunk. The pod remained smouldering in the side of the tree until a sharp hiss pierced the crackling of the heat, the pod began to shudder and then the sides erupted in a puff of smoke and then the door explosively flew off its ends into the air and landed somewhere in the thicket of the jungle.

As the smoke cleared from the pod's mouth a figure exited by jumping the tree and landing at the floor of the jungle, it's figure much like that of all Helldivers, Lt James Asher stood observing his surroundings, his MT/IR/LD scanners swept the area in a few pulses and gave him a tactical image of the surrounding region. There was nothing to indicate what might be in the surrounding regions; he then began to unload the rest of his gear.

Jumping back up he removed 3 canisters, 1 which had a long Camo Cloak, tailored specifically for him, it had nano-reflective frames

made to absorb and bend light, and it would manipulate the surrounding jungle to help him hide from possible wildlife and such. The next canister had his survival/science gear, made to ensure his survival on a hostile planet or in this case test local plant life and such for contaminants. The last case had his munitions, the basic necessity to him, 9 clips of AP/API/HEAP rounds, he removed 6 explosives, 2 standard flash, 2 frags, and 2 magnetic/magnesium grenades. He pulled out also 4 rather boxy looking objects, HE-AP Claymore mines. He made sure to place those into his back latch. And to top that all off, he pulled out the one and only treasure in his stash, the Glaive-SR-CX, a 30mm sniper rifle was one of the UCAFs most recently updated rifles, unlike its predecessors the 30mm Mantis and Viper 20mm, the Glaive features a new addition to its components. A portable micro fusion drive was added into the design of the rifle to power the barrel of the gun, which now included a Mass Driver. The mass driver feature would help increase the penetration by approx. 10 fold, the driver was intended to fire a 2 inch round essentially composes of highly charged ions to detonate upon contact with an enemy vehicle and decimate it. The Glaive also features 3 variations of the original munitions used, a tungsten AP round, Incendiary Rounds, and EMP charged shells. The rifle sports a bipod and 20X optical zoom camera/scope.

James', own features were impressive as well, as a Helldiver class scout; he was wearing the HITS, Heavy Infantry Tactical System armour, made specifically for Helldivers of his calibre. The armour compositions were one plated layer of armour made from Duratanium alloys, the armour manufactured was intended for long term missions on forest worlds and frozen arctic worlds, this qualified for the latter in the case of James. The suit was also an exoskeleton and supported over 50 micro machines and energised skin layers meant to increase reactions and speeds for the user. The added gadgets of the suit include a SCCS (smart combat computer system), Motion Sensors, Infrared scanners, Sonic Pulse Emitters, and multiple hidden blades and pockets for munitions.

The last bit of detail about James' suit was that it sported antlers on top of his helmet, as a sign of rank and respect he deserves when recognised. James had spent years to earn the rank of First Lieutenant during the war, and all those under his command appreciate it so. After James had finished getting into gear, he scanned the area and began to pick out local signals, he would have to make contact, either with locals or his teams, he just hoped that Dean and the marines hadn't run into trouble without him. Picking a direction, James headed into the worldâ€¦

XXXXX

Location: Griffon Territory, Frost Talon Mountains

Time: 3:30

In the rushing tundras of the top of the griffon's territory, three moving figures headed towards the summit of the mountain chasing after what they assumed was something of interest. These figures were of course not Equestrians, but their neighbours, the Griffons, a half lion/eagle like race, they had much similar body structures to that of the ponies, but differed in their beaks and their taloned feet and claws.

Of the three heading to the summit, one was a young male, wearing heavy cloth and wool garbs, he had a simple helmet on his head with a face protector and the mark of his clan on some plates of armour. The griffon kingdom hadn't exactly made much improvements over the years in the sense of technology and progress, it had militarism and traditions, but much of it restricted change. The griffon clan heads had been too stubborn to accept altering their 500 years of continuous tradition.

As one of these traditions, the weakest males and best females are put onto patrols across the border to keep them occupied or out from causing murmurs against the stagnating situation, and sometimes it was just out of spite from certain fools. Whatever the reason for this young male to be out here was meaningless, the temperatures were below freezing and his feathers were about to fall off.

But the leader of this patrol was adamant about getting to the mysterious object that had landed about a mile from their outpost. He just prayed to the spirits that someone gave him something warm before he had to start getting prosthetics for his feet. The second griffin was a female who looked about as comfortable as the male, she had deep grey feathers and a rather astute figure, but wasn't showing it at the moment from the sheer temperature drop. She had similar gear as the male and shared almost the same opinion on what was going to happen if they didn't get somewhere warm soon.

At the head of the patrol was a brown feathered female with a slightly more buff appearance, but that would probably be from her upbringing, this griffin sported purple rims around her eyes and had white feathers as her hair, she had the only rifle as a mark of command and sported the most armour with clothing. Gilda scanned the summit and found her mark, she yelled over the roar of the winds.

"Come on, I can see the site ahead, it shouldn't be a few more meters." She stated over the gale force winds.

The other griffins didn't respond and continued to trod after her, she dismissed them as weak, but that was who they gave her to command. She huffed and hurried onwards to the object. It was about 40 meters away and had left a sizeable crater, but what was surprising was that it could have easily left an even bigger one considering the size of the object.

The oblong cube was about 3 meters in height and 2 meters across, it had panels and grates over its length, and sported numbers on the side, it was nothing like anything Gilda had seen. She got close enough to feel the heat from the object, it was hot enough for steam to billow off as snow pelted it from all sides, and she carefully brought out a knife and poked the object carefully.

It was then her patrol caught up and said in awe.

>"Whoaâ€¦"| "<p>

"Now that isn't something you see every day." The male commented over his freezing breath.

CH3

Vocal initiative

XXXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: 12:22 PM

James couldn't believe his luck, he had found the source of the signals, and it was civilisation, bad news was, it wasn't the civilisation he wanted. And it wasn't what he liked either, he staked himself about 30 meters at the top of a ridge overlooking what was a small encampment of aliens, humanoid ones. They were about human size, many of them were coloured, sporting stripes and multi-coloured hair and clothes, it looked as if he was watching a damn spectrum scanner, the multi coloured beings went about their daily business in their town.

It was about 8 hours since his landing in the jungle and he had found society of sorts. But he was going to play it cool, the UCAF directives had been clear not to allow underdeveloped species contact with the human race, especially if they don't have FTL or space flight abilities. James was smarter than that; he was going to play it safe. But if the town was the only one around here, he might as well see what kind of beings they are.

He pulled his Omni-scopes back and began to head down to the small town, he'd look around and then head back into the jungle, he'd use the town as a focus for searching for the marines, and possibly finding something to eat.

XXXXXX

Location: Ponyville

Time: 9:30 AM

Roughly a day had passed since the meeting with Celestia and Luna at Whitetail Woods, and from their last meeting, Twilight had to go and alert the others for their upcoming meeting with Celestia and Luna at Canterlot. Of course there were plenty of questions being asked about what and why they needed to prepare, and she told them that she wasn't allowed to disclose because of the bracelets on her wrists, they'd have to learn about it when they got to Canterlot.

Celestia by her promise sent Twilight a letter about the arrival of the escorts and security to take her and the other elements of harmony to the castle. There they'd have to be processed and then permitted into the compound in the Cyrene Peaks, the facility was an old fortress with mining networks built into the mountain hundreds of years ago by the first settlers of Canterlot. The complex served as a shelter and research facility for the Equestrian Guard and the command centre for the few military ponies out in the world. Celestia however had kept the facility rather discrete and ponies don't usually ask questions about the army.

The Cyrene complex was going to be a rather interesting experience as

they'd be the first civilian ponies in a long time to go into such a place. Twilight felt rather excited and nervous, she wondered what had happened to the being that she had found, and if it was still alive. But what got to her most was that Celestia and Luna hadn't told her about the other crash sites, from the pony-net news, there were more than a dozen crashes near civilized regions.

Celestia and Luna reassured everypony that nothing had gone terribly wrong and there was no attack from anyone, it was just an unlucky meteor shower which had gotten too close to the planet. The Equestrian Astrological Society had gotten down onto the ground as soon as they were available. The quarantine sites were practically censoring the sites and what they hid, it made ponies think that there was more than just meteors involved, but even the anon ponies wouldn't dare to delve deeper into the mysteries.

Twilight hoped that this wasn't starting to become a situation which would cause more harm than good, Celestia and Luna were already trying to keep things calm, and the last thing they'd need is more problems. On top of which, there had been some murmurs that the griffin kingdom had also received a meteor impact, but from what the griffins say, it was nothing more than a hunk of metal.

As the mage librarian waited at the front of her home, she was greeted by the other mares.

>Applejack was equal first on the scene; she had Rainbow right next to her as she ran over to the library, she huffed as she finally stopped to catch her breath.
"Ha! I made it by a nose!" The orange mare said in triumph to the cyan Pegasus.

Rainbow landed next to her in dismay, and retorted.

>"Hey I could have gotten ahead easy if you let me get into the air first."<p>

"Dash, fairs fair, I gave you 3 seconds to get up and then we got into gear." AJ replied with a raised eyebrow.

"Hey I thought you said on three not at three." Rainbow defended.

Twilight sighed, her friends as usual. She smiled at the thought and went.

>"Okay, so I take it that both of you packed for the stay at Canterlot?" She asked.<p>

Applejack nodded pulling up a suitcase and her Stetson, the orange skinned earth pony mare smiled and said. "All ready to get going." Applejack, was a fine athletic woman at 5'8, going for one of the best runners around Ponyville, aside from Rainbow Dash, she was strong and rather independent and stubborn about it. She tried to avoid asking for help, unless it was really that necessary, like the time the Flim Flam brothers came to town, or the Apple Bucking season that almost wore her down to a crawl. AJ was honest, and that was her element, being honest to all ponies as much as she can, only very rarely having to put on a face when things got tight or desperate. AJ wore a denim shorts with her red and white checker shirt knotted with her white singlet underneath, her long blonde hair running down her back.

Rainbow answered Twilight with an annoyed response.

>"Yes." She was competitive in the sense that she didn't like losing, she learnt that winning wasn't necessary all the time, but it was a hard habit to drop. Rainbow was a nimble 5'6 slightly taller in comparison to Twilight herself. She was a cyan blue Pegasus with rainbow coloured hair, she had a very athletic, agile, build. She was trying to get into Equestria's best fliers, the Wonderbolts and her aspiration was to join their ranks and show the world her stuff.
Rainbow had a very competitive mind, she always tried her best to outdo other ponies in certain competitions and she was also a type of pony who was rather independent, she never really asked for help unless she needed it. Or she'd just go hunting for answers herself and ignore everypony else, which can be rather bothersome for ponies around her. Rainbow of course never means for anything bad to happen, she just has a hard head. But the most defining quality of Rainbow was that she was loyal to the group, she was loyal to her friends and to all those with a just cause. Her heart was always in the right place, if her head wasn't. Rainbow was dressed in her jogging shorts and sweat top with a sky blue jacket lined with white stripes.

Twilight let RD and AJ have their little competitive discussion as she waited for the others to get here, it wasn't long until Fluttershy and Rarity came. Rarity in her usual habit of perfection came with 3 bags of what Twilight assumed were clothes and dresses for the occasion, of course being the fashionista, she always wanted to be prepared for whatever she might need to wear at the castle. Fluttershy was trailing slightly behind with a suitcase and a medicine bag, the yellow butterscotch Pegasus usually kept to herself and tended to her animals most of the time, being here it was a bit of a worry for her, she didn't like the idea of leaving all her pets. But Twilight reassured her that nothing would go wrong leaving a few other ponies to take over for the time being, the Pegasus agreed to then come along, she just hoped that Angel was going to be fine with Bon Bon and Lyra.

Fluttershy, the heart of kindness and absolute fear, the yellow Pegasus was a nice hearted pony, but she had a core of steel, and that was something Twilight feared, on one occasion she managed to paralyse a Cockatrice by staring at it with her own power of control, she used it on a dragon as well and managed another amazing one to paralyse a tribe of diamond dogs during an unprecedented adventure sometime before. Fluttershy was quiet but very strong at heart; she cares for every animal big and small and tends to them as best as she can. Fluttershy wears a green jumped over a blouse and has a long skirt which reaches her shins; she is about 5'6ft.

Rarity, the element of generosity was a mare of integrity and stature; she tried hard to get herself well known as such and tries to fit into the world of industry, but doesn't wish to leave Ponyville, at least not yet. She spends her time providing help to those when she can, unless it results in less than clean situations, then she'd try skirting around it. But in all honesty Rarity tries to provide those around her with nice things, such as dresses and planned events, tea parties and certain occasions. Rarity is 5'7ft and wears a white long sleeve blouse; she has a black short skirt which is accompanied by net stockings. Rarity is a white pastel mare with a beautiful velvet hair which curls in and around to the length of her back.

-Exactly as soon as Fluttershy leftâ€¦|

Angel tapped his feet on the ground and waited as the 2 new mares arrived to take care of the house, the light green mare and her cream coloured friend arrived at the door when Angel hid and got prepared.

>"This is so exciting; I wonder what all the animals are like?" Lyra asked.<p>

"They're probably docile; they're like that with Fluttershy, I'm sure that they'll be fine with us." Bon Bon replied.

As soon as they entered through the doorwayâ€|
>"SPLAT"<p>

Lyra's face was covered in carrot cake and Bon Bon ducked as a dozen more flew through the air at the two mares, they ducked outside the door of Fluttershy's cottage and wondered in absolute shock what was going on. They took a peek as a dressed up Angel in a general's uniform smiled with carrot in paw and pointed at the mares, dozens of mice and other animals loaded cake cannons and catapults.

The two mares ducked from the door as a new barrage came through and almost nailed them in the face. Lyra went.
>"You want to rephrase that with me?"<p>

-Back at the libraryâ€|

Twilight waited for the last and surprisingly the slowest member of the group? It usually never takes Pinkie Pie this long to get here, even with the Pound Cake twins, the mare usually shot here in less than a momentâ€|
>"Don't you mean less than a sentence?" A pink blur suddenly asked breaking the laws of physics once again. Which reminds me; get off the text Pinkie and focus back on the story, I don't want to have this argument again.<p>

"Okie Dokey Loki!" The mare commented without noticing that Twilight was staring at her in bewilderment.

"Pinkie who are you talking to and how did you get here from thin air?" Twilight asked.

"Easy I jumped the paragraph and landed here, and I was talking to the storywriter, he's a fellow all the way up there in the place beyond, and he makes things happen here." Pinkie smiled comically while Twilight rubbed her head when she listened to the insane chatter of her friend.

"â€|So yeah, going over from the other fics I gotta say, you have talent big guy." She finished saying at me.

Pinkie turned about and focused on Twilight and said.
>"I got all my things packed with help from ED." She punctuated with a smile.<p>

Twilight went.
>"Okay, so I guess that's done, Princess Celestia's escorts would be here pretty soon."<p>

Pinkie nodded and hopped along with her bag and sat down happily

munching on some sweets. Pinkie was the element of laughter, the party mare was a bright pink skinned pony who as anyone can guess loved parties, and she loved to celebrate and she loved everything colourful and fun. She was a playful pony who had a strange habit of breaking the rules unwittingly and accomplishing the near impossible with nothing more than a lift of her hoof. Pinkie was a 5'6 mare with puffy hair and wore, strangely the least out of the group, hot shorts and a tight fit top which were both white and blue stripped.

The group waited for about half an hour until the escorts arrived, the ponies who arrived were not the normal guards that Celestia sent on most of her previous tours or occasions, they were armoured black ponies who happened to be earth ponies and unicorns with pegasi, they had arrived on what Twilight could see were metal Dirigibles.

The escorts greeted the mares and showed them to their seats, and packed the bags, to which AJ refused help with her own clothes and so did RD, the guards backed off and let them do it themselves while they prepared to leave. But before they did, a young black maned guard, Twilight could see was an officer greeted her.

"Greetings Twilight Sparkle, I am lieutenant Blackburn, of the first Equestrian Marines, we were told to get you ready for the trip, Princess Celestia had told me to introduce myself before we arrived at the castle to discuss the sensitive matter of what will be happening. Celestia regrets to inform you that she will not be able to meet with you right away and that she will see you and the other elements later in the night." Blackburn told her directly.

Twilight understood, Celestia would have business to attend to, and surely the princess would make time later. But something didn't feel right.

>"Did she specify why she would be busy for the day?"<p>

Blackburn replied.

>"There has been a border incident last night in the griffin kingdom, the princess had been speaking with the clan representatives on the matter and she has been busy trying to keep them from pointing fingers."<p>

Twilight took in the information and boarded a dirigible with Fluttershy and Rarity. As the vehicles began to pick up speed and get off the ground, ponies in the surrounding area watched the escorts take the elements off to Canterlot, and to their strange visitors from beyond. But something else was brewing elsewhere.

XXXXX

Location: Town- Equestrian- Evergreen Jungles

Time: 12:45 PM

James had arrived in town about an hour earlier and hid himself in the depths of the shrubbery to keep the aliens from noticing him. It really didn't matter much anyway, it seemed that there was a sort of carnival in town today, or a performance, he couldn't tell from the noises being made by the aliens, his neural implants and SCCS attempted to translate, but most of the language had a mix of dialects which was screwing with his translators.

He remained in his bush until the ponies went off for lunch, then he slipped out and began to search around the outskirts of the town, he picked out a couple of homes to look at and began his quick search, a couple of farms were here, and the homesteads were rather large. Not to mention had guard dogs and animals that seemed to react to him.

He had made 3 close calls thanks to dogs and a frightened cow, for now he noted to avoid getting too close to those places. He tried his luck with a house that seemed to be perched at the top of a ridge, it was a small dwelling with 1 occupant or so he assumed from the number of shoes at the front door. He found that the being was busy napping, he took his time to investigate the outside of the home and found himself surprised and slightly embarrassed that he found that being's underwear on a hanging line, well at least he knew it was a she.

James took another poke at another building which seemed larger in height than size; from what he got it was meant to be owned by someone who researched in the night skies, a type of astrologist. But not only that, he entered into the being's dwelling and found that it had noticed his arrival from a couple of nights earlier, it seemed that the being planned on going out looking for his crash site.

James was sure that the being would be disappointed, James had left nothing to salvage at his crash, but the pod would be of some concern, these beings had yet to encounter other races like the human race, and then suddenly going after aliens wouldn't be too smart. James however knew that there was nothing in the UCAF first contact directive about hiding the HEVs, so it was a lose situation, and it wasn't like he could shift the pod anywhere, it was jammed inside of a tree.

He made his way around the room of the alien's home, observing all that was around him, it seemed that the tall building was a sort of library as well as an observatory, he noticed that whole volumes were in shelves that were over the whole room, he didn't pick any out, he doubted that the translators could read any of it yet.

It was then that he heard noise downstairs; he quickly activated his camo-cloak and vanished into the walls of the room. He watched carefully as a young woman, what he guessed was in her early 20s walked into the room with books in her arms and a map. She sighed and placed the books into a messy pile and pinned the map to a board nearby. She stretched a bit and went off to a room nearby.

James sighed, that was close, he began to move to the window when the being came back, he froze in his spot and watched as the alien noticed the window. She muttered something and went to the window and looked out of it, and then closed the exit. James hated his luck, the alien narrowly missed his cloak as she headed to a desk and removed a jacket from her back and placed it on a chair and began to write.

James decided to avoid trying to go through the window; he doubted that he'd get away with opening the window without the being noticing, not to mention jumping out the window wouldn't be smart as he was on the 4th level, trying to jump at that level would get a lot

of attention. He decided to go by the stairs and find another exit.

He crept by the alien female quite easily; she was rather intent on writing whatever it was she was writing. He slipped by her in moments and made his way down the stairs to the next landing and found that this level was filled with windows, but they were all too small for him, and there wasn't any clear route of exit, so he went down the next level. He came up against a door that led into the second level and opened it quietly. Upon entering he found that the level was also clear of any exits, and there was one balcony which exited to the front of the building in the midst of the town, so that was out of the question. He finally reached the first floor and found that there was the front door, which had a bell on the front with a spring retraction that would make a lot of noise. He went to the back of the building and found that there was a back door, and it was locked.

He went to work and began to pick the lock with a small knife and a pinning needle used for stitching wounds. He carefully found the sweet spot and opened the door in a matter of moments, he moved the door and got out into the backyard of the building, he rushed off back into the foliage and out of sight. Unwittingly for James he didn't notice that a certain alien was watching him escape.

XXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: 2:20 PM

The rumble of engines kept the driver warm, he wasn't alone in this place, and as long as Sandra kept running he'd be fine. Also the fact that he wasn't alone, he had his gunners and crew in the back of the LAT, light armoured transport, cruising their way through the great outdoors, it was amazing that the crew managed the fall without breaking the Bulldog's back, but then again these were tough buggers. They don't fail on account of plasma fire or fuel rod damage; unless it was anti-tank pulse cannon then that would be a very different story.

The bulldog crew got the vehicle going after a whole day spent in some swamp, clearing the engines and getting the transport unstuck from the depths of the muddy earth. The crew managed that and got them on the trail, of sorts. They had heard of light radio transmissions from other members of their force, one had gone far off the grid, another crashed somewhere that he had lost contact, but the others were still within range, at least most of them.

The com officer was blaring over the lines.

>"This is bulldog, 3-1, we're on route to rally point theta, anyone on the line head to grid position 233-445, and follow us in. If not then hold your peace." He repeated for the 30th time.<p>

There were a few pings on the com hub that acknowledged that there were some of the troops who had an idea where to head, others would have to go in some other way, or wait until the main force regrouped. From what the com officer could tell there were 3 drop pods which landed 18 marines across the region, 2 others had come along, but one went down after an afterburner failure and cooked the marines alive,

another crashed into the ocean and wasn't heard after.

20 drop pods had also come down with various members of the helldiver's division, the most elite force of marines in the UCAF, and they had experience with these sorts of drops. Not to mention getting out of hot situations. 5 LATs and LRVs had also come down, but 2 had survived from the LATs and there had been no word from the LRVs which had gone off the grid.

4 fighters had also come along, 2 of which suffered catastrophic failure from the transition and crashed or burned up on re-entry. The other 2 were elsewhere, one being reported to have taken too much damage and forced to land, while another looking for a site to land safely.

>There was also a core of armoured mechanised suits launched after the marines, but they had scattered after the pod that was carrying them failed due to damage in slip-space.<p>

The last of the whole mess was a flight of UCAF gunships and Falcon light VTOL. The gunships which followed them in were lost when they hit the atmosphere, they probably went off the grid, or crashed. But the falcons were nowhere to be found, even though it was reported that they were landing next to the LATs.

The com officer was no trying to unfuck the whole thing before they lost anyone else, but for the rest of them out there, it was every man for themselves.

XXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: 2:44 PM

The pilots of the falcons hated the fact that they were grounded, and not because of bad weather conditions, it was because the pods which were carrying their falcons had screwed up their trajectory horribly and crashed them about 5 miles into a forest which was now entangling their birds, and some of them hit ponds and swamps on the way down, so the pilots now had to figure out a brilliant way to get clear of the forest and clear of the swamps and regroup with the rest of the force.

At one of the falcons, a pilot was on a short ranged com trying to get anyone's attention, but they could only receive the transmissions from the LATs which were now going away from their location to the rally point and leaving them all behind. Someone was going to pay for this fuck up. The commander in charge of the whole flight was busy tied up with trying to dig out a falcon stuck in a meter's worth of muck.

Back at the coms, the pilot yelled again.

>"This is Wasp Actual, we're currently 30 miles from the rally point and stranded at grid location, 129-744, we need assistance, can anyone hear us?" He called.<p>

This time there was nothing on the operator's frequency until a voice came over.

>"This is AC-03, I can hear you, and how's it going?" The person replied.<p>

"Good to finally hear someone aside from the LATs, we need assistance here AC, we've got 3 birds grounded and another 2 more stranded up in these damn forests, were attempting to clear them manually, but there's too much foliage to remove, if you can get to us, it'll be much appreciated to get us in the air." The pilot said with relief.

"Sure thing, I can't fucking stand these swamps anymore anyway, if you can get me a lift then I'll be there in about 3 hours, I've got the drag my ass through a lot of muck right now. I'll contact you in 30." The mech pilot said.

"Acknowledged AC-03, happy trekking."

XXXXXX

Location: Canterlot

Time: 1:15 PM

From their hour's trip from Ponyville, the convoy of dirigibles arrived at Canterlot, but they didn't land in the front entrance, it wouldn't be such a good idea to attract public attention to such thing. The teams flew the girls to a secure landing zone at the back of the castle which led to separate locations.

From there the girls got off from their vehicles with their escorts, Blackburn helped them down from the landing pad and showed them through a private entrance into the castle via a few massive sets of doors. They wound up inside the castle chambers, each room was marked out for all the girls and there was a set map on the walls of each of their rooms to indicate where they could and couldn't go.

Blackburn stopped them before they went into their rooms and addressed them.

>"I'm glad to have been of assistance this afternoon, I do hope that you all enjoy your time here, and for the situation at hand you will be required to attend the meeting at 9:00PM at the private study which has been provided by the princesses, I hope to see you all then and there." He said to them and respectfully bowed and took his leave.<p>

AJ asked.

>"Why is it at 9?"<p>

"Well from what the lieutenant told me at Ponyville the princess was supposed to be busy dealing with a situation with the griffin kingdom, there was a border incident and no one knows what's going on there. So the princess said she'd be busy." Twilight answered AJ.

The farmer nodded and went to her room, Twilight followed the sign with her cutie mark, and she opened the door and found herself in her old room at the castle. Celestia had put in the effort to make sure she felt at home alright. The others settled in, with Pinkie jumping over the whole place about how spectacular her room was.

Twilight took a look and found that it was packed with colours of pink and blue and a few others, but that wasn't it. The room had

candy in it, local Canterlot specialities, it must have been provided by Celestia definitely, which only made Twilight wonder why the princess was trying to distract them. Did it really matter now? Twilight wasn't so sure about what was going on, it just felt like the princess was trying to avoid making contact with them.

She shook her mind from that thought and focused on tonight, Celestia never lied to her or tried to hide the fact in such a manner, she'd come around when the time came, and she'd tell Twilight and the others what was going on. She was sure of it.

XXXXXX

The throne room was quiet, quieter than it should have been, quieter than that of many years since it was first constructed. Celestia sat upon her throne with a look of concern, things had gone far worse than the princess could have ever imagined, the griffins had reported that there was a monstrous metal being devastating its way across the border and every attempt had failed to stop it.

From the ambassadors of the clans, he revealed that the metal being was discovered a couple of nights ago, at the same time that the rifts had come. The thing that the daughter of General Volt had found was terrifying for sure, the griffins attempted to open it up, but after a few hours after they brought it back to the outpost, the thing unfurled and began to rampage its way through the base and left utter ruin.

The griffins were inquiring into what the ponies might know of the thing, but Celestia had little knowledge aside from the 'supposed' meteor shower, the griffins swallowed the answer and asked for assistance, but Celestia had little clue as to how to stop such a thing, if their reports were right, it had powerful energy capabilities, far surpassing normal technology. Not to mention she doubted her magic would be able to penetrate the 'bubble field' it created.

It was that and the fact that Celestia was opposed to harming living things, and from what the machine was doing, it wasn't trying to harm them, it was trying to escape. The griffin ambassador would have none of it though and said that it was claimed by the griffins and the griffins would deal with it if Celestia wasn't willing to.

The ambassador left without a word afterwards and headed off with his escorts back to the clans. Celestia had a feeling that she'd have to break a few rules soon enough. She sat there and gathered her thoughts.

XXXXXX

(Okay, so let's see, we have about 45 humans on a world of magic monsters and humanized ponies with a lot of other races and are trying to regroup while their comrades are either chased or dissected. This can only get worse. And also Pinkie broke the 4th wall again, with a sledgehammer. Not to mention we're soon going to have other visitors and they aren't going to be like the UCAF.)

So any suggestions?

Also, I'd like to have some OCs for use in this story, anyone want to spare a character for use?

Just remember, they're only throw ins for short term use, or reoccurring characters.

And we need to have Trixie show up soon. Zecora is going to be a little more difficult.

4. Chapter 4

CH4

Temperate Minds

XXXXXX

Time: 8:45 PM

Location: Canterlot Castle

Twilight and the other girls arrived at the private study, provided by Celestia, it was a beautiful room lined with stacks of books and held probably held much more knowledge than that of the library back in Ponyville. The girls took to some bean bags and chairs around the room; they had a rather interesting day today, with Rarity trying to drag them off to a fancy dinner at Platinum Palette.

The girls agreed to go somewhere quiet for dinner instead and then went back to the castle to discuss what was going to happen. Twilight was still with the bracelets so she really couldn't talk about what was going on, she only hinted that it was something to do with the meteor shower. So once they finished talking about the meteor shower and what it might have to do, they got themselves into the Study.

They continued to chat excitedly about what they had to do with the strange event from a couple of nights earlier. They waited patiently until the two alicorn sisters arrived, they entered into the room, Twilight and the others bowed respectfully at their ruling monarchs and greeted them with respect. Celestia replied to them.

>"That is not as necessary at this point in time; you may bow only when we are in public, when we are here. I'd rather prefer you'd not be as so formal." Celestia told them.<p>

The mares nodded in acknowledgement, and Luna asked.

>"So I take it that you are all curious as to what is going on?"<p>

The 5 friends began to throw questions straight away, and Celestia raised her hand and they quietened.

>"Very well, as you may know, Twilight had been ordered to keep the knowledge of what had happened over the past couple nights prior." She gestured to the bracelets on the wrists of Twilight, which were suddenly released.<p>

"You can now speak of it, but once we have informed your friends of the situation." Celestia explained.

Twilight nodded and waited. Celestia let Luna begin.

>"As you know, the meteor shower from the past couple of nights wasn't an actual meteor shower; the discovery made that night was that there was an anomaly not usually found around our world, from what we could piece together, the anomaly came from the depths of space. Something came from that anomaly which landed on our world, approximately 30 or so objects landed on the planet, to which were scattered over a wide area. Some landed here, others in the further parts of the world, from those crash sites. We discovered beings that were not terrestrial to our world."<p>

The mares all stared at Luna in surprise, with Rainbow going.
>"You mean that there are aliens in Equestria?" She shouted in excitement.<p>

"Yes, but not those silly movie fictional ones, these are real aliens, which share a striking similarity to our race." Luna replied.

Rainbow quietened down, and Rarity asked.
>"How in Equestria are we supposed to help? If this is a foreign entity, shouldn't you have control over this?" She asked.<p>

"Well yes, but as you need to understand is that the beings are, not what we would consider normal. Their physiology is slightly altered from our own, and they possess no amount of magic, as a matter of fact their bodies seem to ignore magic. But the main reason why we brought you here is that Twilight was exposed to one of them, and we promised her to allow you to know as well. And we need assistance in trying to bring the one we have in captivity back to consciousness." Luna explained.

"You have one alive?" AJ asked in surprise.

"Oh, oh, can we go see it now?" Pinkie jumped about boundlessly.

Even Fluttershy was starting to get rather interested in the whole thing, to which Celestia said.

>"Yes, we will go see it, however I must warn you, there must be no discussion of the being outside of the Cyrene complex, as much as you'd like to speak about it, please do it in private. The being shouldn't be revealed unless absolutely necessary, and we'd rather not startle everypony in the country." Celestia warned.<p>

"Okay!" Pinkie said cheerily.

The others agreed. Luna just set some ground rules before they went off to go see the being though.

>"First you must keep to yourselves when you see the being, we don't know if it would react to being prodded and poked, we've tried to avoid going into surgery, and minimized use of x-rays, which we can tell that it's in fine health as far as its bones are concerned. But try not to start prodding its body; I doubt that it would help.
And please do not use wings or magic, the instruments tend to get bounced by background magic and it has been rough for the ponies to keep track of the condition of the being." She finished.

They all agreed and Luna went over to a bookcase and pulled on a

small statue of the elements of harmony. The bookcase opened up to which the mares all stared in surprise.

>"Remember, it is under E!"<p>

The ponies followed the princesses through the doorway into the depths of the hallway to Cyrene.

XXXXXX

Location: Evergreen Jungles

Time: 5:20 PM

It was late in the afternoon of the next day; James had spent his time foraging for fruits and wild vegetation in this jungle. He found that a number of the vegetables were edible for human consumption; he put the fruits of his labour into a handmade vine basket and dragged it off to a cave he had discovered in his time of hunting.

He spent the better part of the day marking out his territory to animals and the aliens alike, he used his powered hand grips with abrasive talons and ripped at trees marking the border to his territory, to ward off anyone who might think it was smart to approach the cave. He then made sure to make other positions to make it hard to track him; it was standard procedure for hunters like him. Those caves would serve as shelters and safe havens for later use.

James had then gone about making traps to catch small game and larger game, he wasn't going to waste ammo on animals though, the sniper that he had would blast a normal man to ribbons, so it wouldn't work. He had decided to go with close up and personal work. He carved out a couple of wolves which were wandering about and turned them into tonight's dinner and tomorrow's breakfast.

He remained in his cave for now, and tomorrow he'd locate fresh water, to which he might try going into the town again if he didn't find any. The local well was the only other clean source of water not being watched. And his filters didn't help as it took nearly a whole day to wait for a litre of water to be available.

As he sat in his cave overwatching the town, he heard something nearby, an abrupt scream. His ears could tell it close. He pulled his visor on and began to sweep the surrounding shrubbery; he could see the heat of bodies nearby, it was at least 100 meters from his position, nearby his drop pod. He picked his gear up and got into the depths of the jungle.

He knew that going to investigate a mysterious sound in the middle of the evening wasn't the smartest thing to do, wolves tended to prowl and other animals usually were quite active at night. But when you hear a scream for help, you wouldn't let the person in trouble become food for whatever was out here. Even he had standards.

He hit the ground softly and began a sprint through the forest at best speed; he hit 30 miles in a few moments and began to close the distance in seconds. He reached the site of the sound, from what he could see on his heat vision, 4 targets, 3 being bulkier than the 4th; the 4th seemed to be a local from the town.

He stopped to a dead crawl about 10 meters away and took a look at what was going on. The figures of the larger bulkier beings seemed to grab hold of the local; they pulled at her clothes as she screamed. One seemed to be grabbing some sort of bridle or mouth gag, the large alien beings struggled to get it on the local.

James pulled his pistol and placed the silencer on it, he waited for a moment longer and then aimed for the closest being; the M6 fired and blew the head off the first being with ease. The others yelped and jumped from the local and began to search for his position, James didn't give them the chance. He fired 2 more shots and dropped them.

The local was on the ground, James could see some scratch marks and a number of bruises, it seemed that the unknowns had decided to try and knock her out, but failed miserably at the task. James got close enough to the alien local to see what was wrong, first was the fact that the being was the one who lived at the observatory/library at the town, she was pained and tired.

James also noted that there was a cut in her side, he knew that there was a fine line to what he was about to do and what he could get punished for, but as far as the UCAF manual was concerned, the UCAF didn't exist out here. He picked up the wounded local and deftly headed into the depths of the jungle back to his hiding spot.

XXXXX

Location: Falcon Point

Time: 6:20 PM

The pilots had been rather busy trying to get the falcons unstuck from the swamps; they had been successful in getting all the birds out from the vines of the canopies but it was still going to be a pain to finish getting the others from the swamps. AC-03 had arrived from yesterday, but he couldn't help with the swamp problem, his unit wasn't capable of lifting something while sinking in the muck itself, so they had to avoid going into the depths of the swamp.

The falcons had almost been cleared, once the last bird was out, they'd take a direct route to the rally point. AC-03 worked on cutting down some trees to clear an area big enough to get the falcons in the air without any trouble. The task was done in moments as the marine just brought the main guns and fired into the trees toppling many of them in a few seconds.

The pilots cheered as another tree went down from the makeshift clearing, they'd be in the air soon enough.

XXXXX

Location: Cyrene Complex Level 3

Time: 9:15 PM

Upon entering the military complex of Equestria, the mane 6 were surprised by the sheer scale of the facility, it ran down the length of the whole mountain to a natural cavern which also gave it access

to a natural magma spring which powered the whole facility, however the girls weren't going to that level, at least they weren't allowed to due to the sensitive machinery involved.

The Cyrene complex had been constructed further during the years of the first monarchs of Equestria being Princess Platinum, Commander Hurricane and Chancellor Pudding Head. The ruling heads had agreed to this super complex as a plan to store archives of ponydom and magic to further develop over the years. But as time passed the complex expanded into the depths of the mountain and expanded its area of influence.

The military took over during the first years of the Nightmare Moon incident and helped protect Celestia as she took the battle against her corrupted sister. After some time the facility fell into disrepair as it was no longer needed, up until 500 years ago, and then it became storage for many items. Celestia didn't see any use until 200 years earlier and transformed it into a facility for research and development, and then brought the military back in the years of the Griffin Clan civil wars, afterwards the military was left as it was and the facility remained as a command centre.

The facility stretched across the width of the mountain where Canterlot was built, its winding corridors leading to many entrances and exits, and to many wings of the facility, at the moment, the girls were getting a tour of just the research centre. They had to pass 3 checkpoints before being allowed into the wing; there they were decontaminated and allowed access to the wing. It was a rather bland looking part of the facility, as it sported nothing aside from grey walls and sterile air, the whole place breathed of restriction and boring repetition, but as they went further on, they found what they were hoping to see.

Inside a hangar bay where engineer ponies worked, there came the first fragments of the crash sites. A large wing shaped object which sprouted a massive hole in one side lay in the metal deck, blood seemed to be present on the front nose of it, and it raised curiosity and made the ponies feel sick. They hadn't seen many accidents and it was usually very little injuries, never serious ones. This on the other hand was rather serious that someone didn't make the trip.

Celestia explained what they were looking at. "That was found at Trottingham, there were no survivors, but there was plenty of blood to be found. The engineers suggested that the damage caused on the wing crippled the machine and forced it to land at a steep dive, the crash did the pilots and nothing more. The machine is far too damaged to give us any idea how it might have functioned."

The next item on the list was a number of machines, and objects from other sites.

>"Those were found off the coast of Hayton, fishing trawlers found them stuck in their net last night and reported them. It seems that a machine broke up in re-entry and scattered into the ocean. From what was found it looked possibly like an Equestrian, but larger, it's hard to tell from the remains."<p>

The watched as the teams pieced some of the armour back together, its large blocky form possessed 2 legs and seemed to emanate a sense of fear in the ponies, its eyes were black and its face a glass mask

shattered from the impact. They continued onwards to the next set of recovered items. They turned the corner into another observation where ponies went about removing bits and pieces off of large metal machines, which looked like cars. But these were much bigger, they had an armoured shell that was 3 times the size of a large car, and had what looked like radar antennas above.

Then they passed a section where a team was pulling apart strange metal objects small and versatile, many looked damaged, and others were covered in blood. Whatever they were the teams were trying to figure out how they worked. The girls finished their tour there and headed through the next room, they passed into an airlock where Celestia took the time to ask.

"Does everypony understand, this situation is very fragile at the moment, and we need to make sure that it is kept with utmost secrecy understand?" All the ponies nodded in acknowledgement.

They passed on to the next corridor where they ended up in some white walled rooms; it smelled of disinfectant and stale recycled air. They went over through the corridor and onto the next wing, here it seemed that a lot more ponies were in the rooms, they had surgical clothes and had papers with charts and others with samples of blood and other matter.

This was a type of medical wing from the looks of it, but had a different air about it. The girls were lead to the next section of this ward, where they found a large white room; it had strobe lights above and was overhead of what seemed to be many body bags. Twilight and the girls paused at the sight. There were at least 2 dozen bodies present in the room. It made Twilight's stomach turn at the thought of who these beings might have been and the one she found.

Luna decided to address this part.

>"During the recovery of the objects and machines, all of them were manned or were on these bodies, almost all of them dead. A few did survive, but suffered massive internal bleeding or were just dying from radiation poisoning, we couldn't help them in the end as their bodies finally gave out though, out of a total of 26 recovered, there were 2 which survived, and only today 1 just died from surgery."<p>

The body count made the girls shudder at the thought; these poor souls had died before their time. But what could they do? It was how it ended, for them. Celestia took them onto the next section passed the morgue. The girls were led into what was something like a surgery theatre, in the middle of the room was the lone figure covered in a black suit and lying on the surgery table very quietly.

The girls suddenly got excited.

>"Is that the alien?" Pinkie Pie asked in a surge of energy.<p>

The princesses nodded and halted them girls from going in.

>"Girls you must understand is that the being inside the room has been cleansed and tested, for whatever reason his body is in a state of hibernation, we've tried to revive him from it but have had little luck, and when we removed his armour it seemed that he fell deeper into his sleep and for that we don't know how to properly re-suit him. The armour isn't locking back into place. So we warn you, please minimize directly poking him."<p>

And Pinkie Pie asked.

>"Like this?" She asked as she jabbed the alien's nose from the other side of the glass window.<p>

"Yes, please don'tâ€|" Celestia and Luna turned to see that the Pink party pony had managed to get passed them in under a second and start poking the alien in the nose. They stared in utter bewilderment at how the pony managed to get through the retina scanner, and the metal doors and the security lock systems in under a second.

Twilight and the others face palmed and RD said.

>"Pinkie Pie, you're so random."<p>

XXXXXX

Location: Evergreen Jungles

Time: 10:34 PM

About 5 hours had passed since the alien was recovered from her situation, James had a rather quiet night for the most part, just switch bandages and make sure of no infection. The alien had gone under well for the treatment, being unconscious is a handy thing when in surgery. The helldiver patched the wound up in seconds; he had enough past experiences with injuries to know what to do, not to mention his HUD had a medical program to help in dealing with injuries to oneself and others.

He cooked up some soup of local wild berries and wolf meat, he had the meal about 3 hours prior while waiting for the being to recover from her injury, she didn't stir until a few minutes ago. And now all he had to do was to wait a bit more, he laughed at that thought. Considering he was a trained killer with a sniper rifle, who went hunting with covenant elites and grunts not to mention jackals, plenty of jackals. But his greatest challenge came from the elite, special operations rangers divisions he faced during the Daedalus crusades. Those things would leave any marine with nightmares.

He poked a twig at the fire and made sure that the warmth was still there, it was only then he noticed his guest was finally coming out from her slumber. She rolled to her side and stared up; she was dazed for a moment and then shot up in surprise. She looked around and found James, and suddenly crawled away from him.

James didn't move, he just turned his head and looked at her through his visor, then he turned the helmet back to the fire and kept his HUD cam trained on her should she try to run, it wasn't as if he was trying to keep her here. It was because there was a 5 meter drop to the ground and he doubted that jumping from this height would be smart for someone injured.

The alien however did seem observant and then took a look outside the cave entrance, she pushed the canopy leaf door and found that the height of the drop looked rather unsavoury and pulled her head back in. She still kept to herself and eyed him with caution. James did it more discretely though and made it look like he wasn't watching her.

She took her time to then ask something. But his translators were

having trouble, as usual; they had a mix of English and a language that reminded him of Old Anomian. He tried to unscramble to language barriers by running it through all modern languages, no luck, he tried covenant languages and had very little luck. They weren't properly matching up.

He would have scratches his chin if it wasn't for his armour, but that might frighten the alien off. Considering the fact that he was a massive 7ft armoured soldier with deer antlers on his head and 4 glowing eyes, that might as well have been a damned death world spider, at least they don't scare the living shit out of everyone.

And the thought hit him, if he removed his helmet and tried physical contact, would that help in this situation? He was like what these aliens were; he had seen a few males around. But that wouldn't help in terms of size or the fact that he had not a damn clue as to what this being was trying to tell him. But he took a shot at it, he might as well, he didn't have many choices and he didn't want to bring more attention to his location by remaining a mystery, it might attract a lot of attention to his little piece of quiet and scare off all the game he needed to survive on.

Not to mention he didn't like the idea of just packing up and relocating to another location far away without nearby civilisation. Or having to move to another nearby town which had very different forests and such, he only just got used to this place. So he took his own idea and took a gamble. If one could say it was such a thing.

He carefully turned the back part of his helmet and pulled at a release for the neck brace, it came off in a hiss of air escaping, the alien curled up a bit in tension watching him carefully; she didn't understand what was going on. He pulled the helmet up carefully and set it to his side, he breathed in the air of the cave, fresh and dry, he hadn't smelt the air properly in a long time, and most of the meals he ate were with his helmet half on.

He turned his face to her and looked at her carefully with his own eyes; he still had his neural link attached which was still crunching an internal HUD in his eyes of what he was seeing. That and the fact that he had cybernetic implants and nano-machines running in his body and making his eyes glow a shallow blue didn't help either. The alien was intrigued and frightened at the same time, he could hear her heart beat increase and his neural computer analysing her.

He spoke to her in a direct but softly.

>"Hello there, I'm James, I helped you outside, are you feeling better?" He asked carefully trying sound as passive as he could.<p>

The being didn't seem to understand his language and he didn't bother with trying other languages, he doubted that this alien understood a thing as well. He decided to seat himself back at his spot and simply relax for a moment, he sighed trying to figure out a barrier that could be overcome. Something did come into his mind, the being took interest in what he was trying to say and she tried to speak back to him.

The other thing that caught his attention was that he could see his reflection in his helmet; he guessed that he looked scarier than the

helmet. His skin was pale, almost ghostly white from the years he hadn't removed the helmet since he first acquired it. As a matter of fact his whole body was probably the same colour, pale white. His eyes were once blue but were now cyan and glowed near the cornea due to the implants he received for his eyes. His hair was long, he didn't remember it being this long the last time he checked, it was messy and slightly curled, but it was grey very grey.

The genetic augmentations for the helldivers were on par with the Spartan Beta Corps, they weren't extreme, but they still took effect on the marines. His was that he had changed hair and growth, aside from that he was human, in the most sense. He stared at his helmet, not paying any heed to the alien who was rummaging in her pocket; she brought out a small book and then carefully went over to him.

He looked over to her as she came to his side; she put the book next to his side and then hurried back to the cover of his cloak which was acting like a blanket for her. He picked up the book and looked at it, it had stylised writing and a picture of what he assumed were letters. It was then that his neural computer began to notice something; it was a language it recognised, in moments James felt his head begin an auto-decryption of language.

It ran by something, not modern, ancient, it was looking for ancient languages, and modified them to modern ones, and found 4 matching variants and began a hard decryption and translation. It was old Nova Arcadian, the language of a people who jumped across worlds during the old era, but that was impossible. How could aliens be using an altered version of Arcadian?

The translators finished in moments and he felt his head fill with new knowledge, he could understand Arcadian. He looked over to the alien and asked.

>"Why did you give me this book?"<p>

The alien was just as surprised as he was when he asked her that. She replied.

>"I thought if you couldn't understand me, then I might be able to teach you."<p>

James processed the conversation and summed it up to.

>"Well thank you for the book, it helped quite a bit, but might I ask. Who are you?"<p>

XXXXXX

Location: Cyrene Complex

Time: 9:20 PM

He girls had to get decontaminated again, and then processed into the room one by one as the standard procedure went for all personnel in the facility. It was a pain in the flank, but the doctors had been thorough with warnings of cross contamination which they'd like to avoid for the unconscious alien. They hadn't much of an idea how the being would react to the air that ponies breathed and they wanted to make sure that it didn't cause problems.

Once inside the girls got to get a closer look, and unlike Pinkie Pie, they didn't poke the alien in the chair, except Rainbow Dash who

was curious as to how the alien's muscles were like, which made the others giggle at the idea of her going for a boy, to which she defended that she had interests of her own.

Princess Celestia and Luna both told them what they knew of the alien, which wasn't much, aside from it having an exactly equestrian like body and biological type. It made no sense as to why it didn't react well to magic though or for that matter why it didn't have wings or horns. Luna commented that no race could have the same traits as another, the alien was the same, and it had no traits to share in. But that didn't mean that its descendants couldn't, if they took a guess. The alien could mate with a pony and have an offspring which would inherit both traits of pony and alien, if the rules of breeding were the same.

That said, the girls blushed at the idea of trying it with an alien, no matter how much you dressed it up an alien was still an alien. Twilight inquired into one thing though.
>"Did the alien have anything on it when you brought it into the complex?"<p>

Celestia and Luna looked at each other and then nodded. They brought out a container, the size of toolbox, and they opened it up.
>"We found these, one being a weapon which we unloaded another being some strange devices and other gadgets, but it doesn't seem to function for us."<p>

Twilight and the girls looked into container filled with objects. What looked like a handgun, much bigger handgun and it had clips of ammo, Twilight could tell that it was a gun from the many records of Equestrian military history books she had at the library, but none of them had a handgun like the one she was looking at. There were dog tags, and something that looked like a notebook, it was strange it was a black device which held strange cards inside.

And then there were 3 other objects, a small handheld device, it was shaped like a cube and had some other joints which opened it, however it was locked. There was a cube or what looked like a cube which was about the size of Twilight's palm, it was smooth and glossy, and it looked really out of place. And the last thing that she looked at was a small cylinder like tube which had a small part that could be pulled open; it snapped the tube in half and revealed an image, a young child, smiling with a family. The young boy in the image was the alien, smiling happily in his youth.

XXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: 11:23 PM

Three days on this unforgiving rock and still he had yet to trace them; his hands grasped at the dirt below his hooved feet and let the dust fall through his forked fingers. Zaro hated this dirt ball, but he couldn't get off of it, he was stranded here, just like his fellow elites. His lieutenant asked.
>"Commander, how much further do you believe that Rebas and his rebels are?" The stalker class spec ops asked.<p>

"Not much further, and neither are the Gauntlet of Requiem and its

main force, we must hurry to contact Rebas to regroup with us. We have an artefact to hunt." Zaro ordered.

The elite officer nodded and got back on his short range subspace communicator. Zaro turned his attention back to the night time skies. He scanned the heavens above for anything that might indicate the signs of another ship entering the world's orbit. He was being patient, but if the subspace transmissions were true then a hunter class Corvette was about to come down on their skulls very soon.

He prayed to the holy forerunners to provide him with a miracle or an honourable death, or a very fast grave. He had with him, 12 elites of the Broken Legion, and a small strike force of allies who followed him here, wherever here was. But when he did, so did Vesdarea' and the forces of Requiem, but not all made it. He had the human commander of the Iron Clad to thank; he rammed his ship into the command destroyer and wiped out practically all of Vesda's forces in a single act of defiance.

But that didn't deter the zealous Master Zealot from his hunt against Rebas and Zaro. He hoped that the scattered humans gathered in time. There was a war to be fought and not enough time for 'civility and champagne' as one AI construct commented during his years as a rebel against the prophets.

He eyed the night skies, he knew that Vesda was coming and he was bringing hell itself from above.

XXXXX

Thank you Deviant Artist b-312 for your submission of Zaro

And yes I modified the character for this story.

And also there are a number of other classes of elites in my AU of Halo so be warned, there are really nasty ones and awesome ones as well.

(Original from the submission)

Full Name: Zaro 'Veros
>Nickname: Revan
Race: Sangheili
>Gender: Male
Age: 38
>Height: 8'6
Weight: 273 lbs
>Voice: Low vocal sound and pitch (relative to species).
Eye: Colour: blue
>Skin: Colour: Brownish
Rank: Field marshal
>Clan: Legionary
Quote: Honour is a fool's prize. Glory is of no use to the dead.

Armour:

>Helmet: field marshal
Primary colour: steel
>Secondary colour: steel
Detail colour: Red

Other details:

>History: Zaro was born in the state of Veros he like every young Sanghili child did not know his father and was trained to fight with the energy sword. At the age of 18 he joined the human covenant war and after his first battle he was promoted to the rank of officer because of how well he commanded his forces after his CO was killed

by a human sniper.<p>

Two battles later he saved a group of young Sanghili minors that were pinned down by four human warthogs, he took a fallen Unggoy Spec Ops fuel rod gun and destroyed three of the four warthogs the last was heavily damaged and fled the battle he was promoted to zealot after the battle after which he was never seen without his fuel rod gun which was painted a black colour with the same Red outlines his future armour would have.

After another 5 years he was promoted to general after he killed one of the dreaded demons. However he didn't tell the prophets that he didn't kill the human he let them live and just took the helmet to prove he killed them that was when he started to question the prophet's motives. at the battle of reach five years later he killed an entire platoon of marines on his own and rescued four zealot class elites from their prison earning him the rank of Field Marshall but instead of the maroon coloured armour he painted it black.

During the time of the civil war he decided to side with the arbiter after all his fellow field Marshals were killed by a brute kill team in their sleep. He fought on the ark alongside a group of ODSTs in which he gained a great deal of respect from them with his no one gets left behind ideals. They earned his respect as well after they spared a group of grunts who begged for mercy. Zaro was the leader of the ground forces of the fleet of particular justice, but before he could get his ship into position to jump to slip space with the supreme commander's personal ships and follow the pillar of autumn it was disabled by an EMP blast in the reactor room luckily nothing was irreparably damaged and no one died in the blast what caused it no one knows but Zaro made sure it never happened again.

During the war he was part of a group called the sangheili brotherhood and was believed to be the only field marshal in attendance. He along with Uhze 'Nostrom, Thul 'Kufhaal, T'kan Ghan, Alei Iakane, and Thel 'Voramee were the brotherhoods best soldiers.

Personality: smart, open minded, and will show mercy if the enemy fought with honour.

Weapons: black fuel rod gun with glowing red trim with a plasma core to have unlimited ammo, two Black energy swords with Red lines flowing through the blades of his own creation that combine with his shield generator to have an unlimited charge. And dual energy daggers.

Equipment of choice: armour lock and active camo both equipped at the same time so he can use one or the other without switching between the two he also adopted the human music playing device and installed it into his helmet because he had listened to some songs the ODSTs were listening to and found them to be a good change of tune from the sounds of war.

(Modified version)

Class: Special Ops Ranger Commander

Full Name: Zaro 'Veros

>Nickname: Raven
Race: Sangheilli
>Gender: Male
Age: 36
>Height: 8'6
Weight: 262 lbs
>Voice: Low vocal sound and pitch (relative to species).
Eye:
Colour: blue
>Skin: Colour: Dark grey
Rank: Commander
>Clan: The Broken Legion
Quote: Honour in death, and death in
honour.

BIO: Born 2515

>Zaro was a young teen when recruited for the Daedalus campaign; he was at the height of his youth and a young teen, being only 15 when he joined the rangers. Trained under Scout Marshal Casedus Motomoree, he excelled in combat and showed promise as a warrior of speed and agility. Not to mention wits. He graduated at the age of 19.<p>

His first campaign was on the Frozen Front, a hellish wasteland of frozen worlds, where little could survive. His ranger force was completely decimated by the tundra warriors of the Orussian military and its cloned armies which ripped through the elites with horrendous ease. The ranger had to brave the wilderness for over 3 weeks before being found near death in a frozen outcropping of what was once his base.

He re-joined the forces after a month in recovery and went back again, this time more cautious of who he was fighting. Zaro fought against the UCAF marines at the battle of Sye, which led him onto the water like world. There he was put up against the superior defences of the UCAF marines, but outwitted them in their placements of guns, he punched a line over the main defences and managed to get the defences down for the rest of the force to attack.

Zaro was in the midst of the chaotic battle which forced the UCAF back, and he was awarded the rank of Ranger Major. His career into the field of battle was usually on worlds that he knew he could win; he led battles on the aerial world of Vesida, where he engaged the UCAF aerial 22nd Vulcan Defenders in a 4 month campaign to which he eventually helped in winning.

Zaro was promoted again and this time given command of his own retinue of warriors and moved into the outer Daedalus crusades, which only made his situation direr. He ended up on a death world, marked for its incredibly high mortality rating, known as Titan Proxy. There he engaged the UCAF for over 6 years without end, which resulted in the deaths of many of his comrades.

He eventually got wounded severely enough that the hierarchs recalled him from battle and placed him in recovery once more. But this time his heart grew with a burden, there was nothing to be gained from this war. He hated the conflict as the warriors of Sanhelios were dying for a lost cause and he eventually began to ignore orders from the hierarchs.

His last campaign was against the human colony of Casidus, where the elites were ordered to slaughter an entire civilian colony; he watched the slaughter unfold at the side of his new commander Vesdarea. His hatred grew for the callous butchering and withdrew only to be confronted by the Zealot Master. With him Rebas a fellow ship master disagreed that this was anything but honourable and challenged the Zealot to battle, which resulted in the Zealot being

defeated.

Vesdarea swore vengeance and gave the two time to leave, they escaped with whatever forces they had and vanished into the depths of space aiding the UCAF in their campaign against the hierarchs and the prophets for their lies.

Weapons: Modified human fusion lance, modified pulse carbines, plasma gauntlets, modified plasma hand cannon, and one 6ft energy lance with handle protection.

Equipment of choice: Covenant Armour- Stalker Class Armour mixed with Commander Gear, he carries, shield dome bracer, 4 energy daggers, 5 fusion grenades, 2 lance bayonet mines, 1 combat computer, EIJ emitters (energised ion jammers), 1 gravity pack.

5. Chapter 5

CH5

Ageless Memories

XXXXX

Location: Cyrene Complex

Time: 9:50 PM

Twilight and the girls spent the next 30 minutes looking around at the alien, but nothing seemed to be that different aside from its pale complexion and soft grey eyes. The alien was 6'5 tall, a full head taller than Celestia if she didn't have her horn. The being seemed so strong, yet so peaceful, Twilight couldn't help but wonder if she could wake him. Or what she assumed was a he, considering how much like a stallion he looked like, his physique however was much greater than just the average stallion though.

The girls felt different about the alien, when they saw the picture they could imagine that it had a family a home and a place to go back to, but as long as it remained in a coma, or here on Equestria it may never get back home. Twilight felt something for the alien, pity or sympathy? She didn't understand what the feeling was, but she knew that this being didn't deserve to be here, it wouldn't be right.

With that in mind she hadn't a clue as to how she and the others could help. As the girls went about looking at the objects of the alien's personal effects, Twilight decided to go in for a closer look at the alien. She knew that trying one thing would be very dangerous, and that was a mind link, she was going to stare into this being's soul.

While the others were busy keeping the princesses busy, Twilight placed her warm hand into the alien's own. Then she began to focus her magic, she knew that this was probably going to be very difficult, a sleeping mind is much like an open book as the mind isn't focused upon a task, but can be very puzzling. A mind awake can be very direct and lucid, which makes the task easier, but if the mind isn't cooperative it could be dangerous for a mind link. But for

a mind link when a pony is in a coma is very hard to distinguish, it is both awake and sleeping, so the mind becomes a jigsaw of feelings and thoughts.

Twilight carefully relaxed and began to push into his mind; she did this when she helped get her friends back from Discord, it was a little bit easier as she put her memories and emotions into their minds, but to go into one's mind and actually pull memories and emotions out is harder. She poked around in the deep miasma of memories, or at least what she could assume were his memories.

The alien's mind was a bit more coordinated, it seemed that he had much mental training and conditioning to help with stress and emotions, but also something else, she couldn't tell but it seemed as though the mind was still active, not like being awake, or asleep, more like a constant semi-conscious state. It was hard to describe what it feels like, but it was keeping her watching the alien's memories.

She pulled herself into the depths further into the memories, and that was when she felt something else. She reached a wall, a mental wall, something boarded up behind deep emotions, it was like a pool of water being sucked into a drain, it pulled at her, and yet she didn't want to try and look. After a while she couldn't help it, her curiosity took over, and she reached outâ€¦

A cool sensation took over as she felt the world shift around her, it was like being pulled into a vacuum and then it became warm, and she could see everything around her. And what she could see wasn't a sight she was willing to see ever again. There was blood everywhere, drying or dried, or still fresh on the ground and walls; it was a horrifying sight that was portrayed before her.

She stepped and felt something by her foot, she looked to see a body of a young alien, its body torn open, and she stepped away in fear and stepped on another body of others. She looked around and realised that she was stepping on corpses, she felt her stomach contents wishing to bail, but this was a mind link not outside, but it still had an effect. She then heard something, sobbing; she turned to see a corridor with broken lighting.

Horrific images around her, her curiosity still drove her; she stepped over the bodies apprehensively and began to travel to the noise. She passed into another room, it was dimly lit, the lights covered or broken by damage or blood. She then saw it, a mass of corpses piled on top of each other, some looking familiar and others not. She travelled over to the top of the pile and found what shocked her.

The little boy from the image holding a knife, and a body of a family member, the young boy sobbed softly as he shook and rocked back and forwards in uncontrollable fear, or pain, she couldn't understand the emotions were too raw. She reached out and touched the boy on the shoulder; he stopped shaking and turned to face her, his bloodied face looking at her with broken hopes.

"Who are you?" She asked.

"I'mâ€¦ Miguel Dean." He replied in a sombre tone.

"What happened here?" She asked.

"Iâ€| died." He said to her and then everything came into rush.

Her mind felt something, like a tap had been opened, the whole pit she had just entered was now rushing outwards. The emotions of jagged dreams and memories flooding into her own mind, she could see it all, death, destruction, warâ€| She screamed and screamed. She returned to her body and then felt the warmth of the world around her return and she continued to stare at the body of the boy, no, man named Miguel.

She then felt someone shake her again; she turned to see Celestia looking at her in concern. She and the others were there, and then she asked.

>"Twilight, are you alright?"<p>

She shook her head and then she dropped to her knees and began screaming.

>"MAKE IT STOP!"<p>

XXXXXX

Location: Evergreen Jungles

Time: 11:20 PM

James had spoken to the alien so fluently, after a while trying to figure out how to speak without the Arcadian accent, he had it rough until he finally nailed it. Afterwards he spent the night talking to the alien, correction, Equestrian about what she was doing in the forest. She replied that she was looking for him; she wanted to find him, out of curiosity and interest.

He laughed at the thought, many women back in the colonies shared similar interest, but for different reasons, mainly due to him being a helldiver. This Equestrian was more interested in him being an alien of this world, which he found rather ironic, seeing as he never considered himself an alien, but she was technically correct about him being non-terrestrial.

He just ran with it, but introduced himself properly.

>"I'm James, or call me Lt Whitetail; I'm hunter class recon marine 21st helldivers."<p>

The being didn't understand what he meant by the title. But she did reply kindly.

>"I'm Skyline the town librarian and local astronomer."<p>

"Skyline, funny name." He replied with a soft chuckle.

"Your name is just as funny, who calls their child James around where you come from?" She huffed.

"Good point, but where I come from, names like mine are rather common." He smiled melancholy to his past.

A momentary pause between the two ensued and after a while Skyline asked.

>"Why did you save me?"<p>

James looked at her in confusion, but he answered.

>"I saved you, because I never let a life die, without a reason. You were in trouble, and there wasn't any reason for me not to save you. And I never let someone just die for nothing, you aren't my enemy, nor my ally, but you still deserve help." He replied.<p>

James continued looking at the fire, Skyline understood what James said and meant. She was rather glad he did save her and help her. But something nudged her mind.

>"James, I'm curious, but are you alone?"<p>

James at that point didn't answer, he just looked at the fire and Skyline became rather tense, she hoped that she didn't upset him. James replied after the pause.

>"Yes, but that is James, not Whitetail. Whitetail is never alone."<p>

She was confused.

>"Isn't Whitetail your last name?"<p>

"No, that's a given name, and a taken name, it is a reminder of what I've accomplished and what I've lost, and what remains. It is what I've become, and it will be what will forever stay with me. Until I die, because Whitetail is who I'll be after I put this mask back on." He said cryptically as he picked his helmet up and laid it into his lap.

"You put that helmet on to be a warrior?" She asked.

"No, I put it on as a reminder of who I became after my rebirth. It is meaningful to me; I am a Callistinian of course. Meaning the mark of this mask confers to what I am and who I am; it is everything I've become after my youth. It's an old tradition and an even older belief. It's been around for so long that time had even forgotten when it began, but it has been around for millennia for those who take the title." He explained.

"So you were raised to entitle a mark that would forever define who you are? And to lose that would be like losing a wing?" She asked.

He tried to get his head around the races of this world, and she did explain about the Pegasus' and their abilities to fly and such, and what happens when a Pegasus loses their wing. He replied.

>"In a way, yes, that's about accurate, in a sense."<p>

She nodded and hushed herself before she asked.

>"But I need to ask you, you said that you were alone. I wanted to know, how would you feel coming to town?"<p>

"I wouldn't know, I'd rather stay hidden in the shadows, and I'm sure that your friends and people wouldn't want me around. I'm not exactly normal around here, and I don't think I want to cause a shock." He replied.

"Don't take it as such James; I think they'd be rather interested in you. Not to mention, we've had worse visitors in the past few months, such as that annoying showmare who came up some time ago, she's been too much of a handful to deal with. I'm sure that you being around

would help draw some tension away." She insisted.

"Why do you want to know me so much?" He asked her.

"Because I think you're niceâ€¦ you don't seem bad, you said it yourself. You said that you're alone, I don't think anypony."

"Humanâ€¦" He corrected. "Human, right, but still you're alone, and I think you'd like some company for a short time. I won't tell anyone where you live, or come from."

"But they'll still question about where I come from, and I wouldn't mind it. But I'd rather avoid causing too much of a stir up." He replied.

She crawled over to him her face near his and said.

>"Please?" With puppy eyes reaching out in a comical fashion it would have made any human have a heart attack. He sighed.
"Very well, I'll go along with you in the morning; however I don't intend to stay around longer than I need to nor do I intend to stay in the town, you can tell your friends that I'll only be there for the day, but after night I need to come back here."

Skyline was pleased and said.

>"Thank you." She withdrew to the makeshift bed and lay down for a rest.<p>

James thought to himself.

>"Why is it the pretty ones?"<p>

XXXXXX

Location: Frost Talon Peaks

Time: 12:51 AM

Gilda couldn't believe her luck, 3 days after they had found that thing, and it had managed to wreck half a base, go on a psychotic rampage through the mountain tops and then begin to head directly for the Equestrian border by itself without stopping, not to mention the thing could fly. It trudged a massive line which anyone with half a brain could follow, and anyone who saw the thing decided to not go any closer.

The massive monster of a machine practically tossed boulders at anyone attempting to follow it, so Gilda and her patrol team had to stay at a full 100 meters from its sight just to make sure that they didn't lose the thing. Gilda was getting frustrated, her father blamed the whole mess on her, and the clans were demanding she bring the thing to a halt or figure out a way to stop and capture it.

But all attempts had proven useless and she didn't understand what she was going up against, but sadly she couldn't return to the clans until she figured out how to get the damn thing to finally stop. She hoped that the Equestrians would help at some point, but the ambassador had decided to give Celestia a cold shoulder on what the machine was doing here in the first place.

So now, she had to pray for a miracle to come her way, because that was the only that seemed likely to help in this chaotic scenario.

XXXXXX

Location: UCAF rally point Theta

Time: 5:00 AM

Theta was located in an open clearing in a valley; it had plenty of fresh water and trees and had a rather good coverage. Plenty of animals and plants to look at, but of course the UCAF weren't here for sightseeing, they were here to regroup and recover. The troops had set up an encampment using whatever materials were available and could be spared, plastic bubble domes and plastic tents and prefabs were up in the first few hours of the LATs and marines.

Next a machine house to help repair damaged vehicles went up with a mini hydrogen engine generator to power the area. Dozens of scanning modules were set to ensure any attacks on the UCAF would be traced and identified before they ever reached them. Drones were in the air patrolling silently.

Marines had set up a 2.1 meter wall with wood and rocks and metals, it was all going to plan for the survivors of the trip and it was going to improve soon enough. The marines welcomed the arrival of the falcon flights and one mechanized suit in the morning after 6, they were glad to have more men and machines on the ground.

The expansion was going well for search operations to go and search for whoever might be dealing with hard terrain, but there was also a need to go looking for survivors who might have gone off the grid. But the commander in charge denied the request, as the location for those who went off were too far to trace, they might stumble onto them later, but trying to blindly go out wouldn't be smart.

So the marines just looked close to home and recovered all in range of the base camp and nearby mountains. The task didn't take long to complete and the scattered personnel were back at base camp by noon. It was now about organisation and exploration; they planned to go out to certain locations to look for minerals and materials.

The first flights of falcons were set to leave in the next morning, and then it would be a simple wait for the UCAF to find them, or someone else to find them.

XXXXXX

Location: Canterlot- Castle Infirmary

Time: 6:00 AM

Twilight felt her body twitch, it was tingling all over, and she couldn't understand what was going on. Her head ached from the mind link; she didn't understand what was it that she saw? Blood, death, destruction— war. Then it came back, but not in a manner that was overwhelming, but rather slowly, a few scattered memories and images were clinging in her head, it was as if someone else jumped into her head and cleared most of the harsh images out.

But that didn't make her feel any better, what she saw had completely changed her mind on Miguel; he was tortured by war, so twisted and

bent. It horrified her to no ends. She couldn't tell if it was remorse or despair that was floating around, but she felt sick as well. She tried to open her eyes when she saw where she was.

The smell of flowers and the steady beep from a monitor, she sat up and saw that she wasn't in the medical room with the alien; she was in a hospital bed. She stared hard to make out everything in the early morning, but managed to adjust her eyes. She found that the room had all of her friends and Princess Luna present; she noticed that Celestia wasn't here.

When she sat up she nudged the side of her monitor which suddenly began beeping loudly that Fluttershy who was sitting next to the machine suddenly bolted upright and said.

>"OH DEAR!" She shouted in a surprisingly loud tone.<p>

The Pegasus hurried tiredly over to the machine and noticed that it wasn't Twilight going into shock; it was just her knocking it off balance. The other girls in the room jostled upright as they too were awoken by the sudden shock of Fluttershy. AJ practically jumped from her sitting upright position into the ceiling.

Everyone was awake and suddenly happy to see that Twilight was alright. Pinkie jumped over to her and hugged her with Rainbow and AJ; meanwhile Rarity stood over with relief and said her concerns while being drowned out by the surprise of the others. Luna was just hovering in the back of the whole happy reunion.

As soon as the others quietened down, Twilight asked.

>"What happened?"<p>

The others were suddenly not so sure how to answer. Rainbow answered.

>"Well Celestia noticed that you were using magic and said some mumbo jumbo about how dangerous that was and tried to 'cut' the link or something."<p>

Luna decided to go into more detail.

>"What Rainbow attempted to explain, was that you had gone into a mind link very deeply and synced your mind to the alien's, which in truth we wouldn't have thought of doing and for the very reason you came out of the mind link and went temporarily insane."<p>

"What?" Twilight said in horror.

"You lost control of your mind due to an overload of information from the memories of the alien, Celestia had to restrain you just to get in and clear up the mess which had clogged your mind. It was far from easy and rather dangerous as Celestia had to surgically remove some memories effects and pull them out of your mind, and also alter others which had become infused inside your own memories. It was an arduous task to say the least, but Celestia had completed it within minutes and had you taken here for recovery. We honestly feared that you might fall into the same coma which had overcome the alien." Luna ended.

Twilight absorbed the information well, and she was rather shocked, surprised, and scared? She didn't know, her head was filled with new knowledge and it was so different now, like she had seen two sides of herself, but it was someone else. It was hard to describe in her

words, she decided to just nod.

Pinkie Pie went and said.

>"Yeah, there was such a fuss, but we're so glad you got better! I'm going to throw a party at the study for all us to enjoy you getting better!"<p>

The party pony then bolted out the door and everyone just shrugged, that was Pinkie and she was just happy to have Twilight back. As the unicorn mare was about to leave the bed, Rarity halted her.

>"Twilight I think you should stay here, you still need a few more hours of rest and we're going to stay for a bit until Pinkie is finished with the party preparations."<p>

Twilight could see that her friends were going to stay by her side, but also make sure that she got some rest, she nodded and lay back down. Luna said as she was about to leave.

>"I have my duties to attend to, the alien's room is in lockdown for now, I apologise for that but after this incident Celestia wanted only the medical crew to monitor it from now on. I will however bring the items of the alien over to show you later at the study though, we might be able to solve the purpose of one of them, and it would be better to get our minds off the incident for some time."<p>

They all agreed and Luna left in a flash, Twilight and the others got back to resting and slowly the dawn came over the horizon.

XXXXX

Location: Evergreen District

Time: 7:00 AM

There were many travellers who came from over Equestria and sometimes the world, faraway places like the Stone Isles or the Frozen Peaks of the Griffin Kingdom, or as far away as the edges of old Astra. There were many ponies that travelled, and a few other beings that came and went every so often.

It was just that the ponies of the district had never encountered and entity with deer antlers and stood at heights only a Princess could, the sight of James made ponies look from all over the place. Murmurs of attention being drawn to him and the pony he was walking with, Skyline seemed a little embarrassed that she and James were getting so much attention, but as she had said earlier, the better for the ponies to get their minds off of the damned showmare who ridiculed everyone else.

James for once didn't have to hide under his cloak, well he had it draped over his body, but it wasn't active camouflage. He strolled quietly beside Skyline who showed him the sights, town hall, the cider hall, and the local pubs and inns. As they passed into the market, James could see something big and hairy, at first he thought it was a brute, but when he got closer he noticed a distinguished difference, it had hooved feet and bent legs with horns and had a number of bits of clothing and items on it.

"That's just Wild One, he came from the buffalo tribes a year ago,

he's a nice fellow, but don't get on the wrong side of him, he can pack a kick and a punch with those legs and his head." She commented.

"I'll keep that in mind." James said as they continued on.

As they got deeper into the market, they got to go shopping, and of course many of the shop owners were rather frightened by the massive horned being with armour they kindly dropped the price of products for him and Skyline. Sky simply shrugged at why everyone was so frightened, but it might have something to do with him having no face.

"Do you have some sort of distinguishable face or mask for that helmet?" She asked.

"If I activated it, people would only get more frightened, it isn't something that everyone would like and trust me on it, and it can scare the biggest beings I've gone up against. I'll cause heart attacks around here." He replied.

Sky took in on his word and nodded. They passed onwards observing the many sights, with the local guard asking what happened to Sky the night before, and she replied an accident which James had saved her. She didn't use his real name and went with Whitetail. The mayor, Vintage Case accepted the explanation, but inquired into where Whitetail had come from. James answered by saying that he was from a very far away land, and that it would be better to leave it at that.

The mayor accepted the statement and let them go on their way, fewer questions asked; the better it was for them. They just needed to avoid causing trouble and everyone would get along fine, or so the white and sky blue coloured mare hoped. It wasn't until they reached the local theatre for the town; it was an open air one with plenty of seats and only a few performances for the off season.

Ponies gathered about for the 10:30 performance by the amazing card master, Dealer. The brown coated stallion did his tricks with ease and took a short break to get his breath with a local cider. It seemed odd that a pony like him would be drinking cider during a performance. But Dealer went on with his show and attracted many ponies around him.

And then as noon came about, more ponies gathered for the noon performance, by the All Powerful and Magnificent Trixie! The title given to the pony already made James dislike her, he'd seen his fair share of competitors in the sense of friends and fellow marines, but they usually did things for fun to keep morale up or to keep troops thinking that they could win battles or for fun.

This was more like a sideshow as the pony alone popped up with fireworks or what seemed like fireworks, his SCCS identified the projections as energy emissions being held together in pyro-kinetic field and being used to emulate lights and sounds. He continued to watch in interest at the abilities of the unicorn. His scanners showed she'd barely be able to equal a small jolt of a plasma pistol.

He continued his scan as she began her show.

>"I the Magnificent Trixie will show you all of my grand feats in challenging any to a duel of talents! That is of course any pony really has any talent."<p>

The crowd seemed to accept her challenge, 9 ponies volunteered, with a few being rather young. Two mares jumped up first, they were both opposite colours, but looked exactly like twins.

>"We're the Chili Sisters, and we're going to take you down you blue bag of wind!" They challenged.
James' question was answered there and watched as the chili sisters began.

Capsi and Cayenne as they introduced themselves were travelling chili sales ponies, but they did perform some of their own tricks with their love of chili. The red and green coloured earth ponies got their bag of tricks, Red swallowed a strange concoction of green liquid and it seemed to glow phosphorous yellow when in the light, the Green mare got her bottle of burning red liquid, it also glowed brightly in the light.

The two sisters downed the contents and then after a moment or two they leaned arm over arm with each other and let off a fiery display of two jets of flames, green and red, which struck each other in a love heart shape. It crossed and struck in the middle where the lights turned yellow and gold and then dissipating as it hit the ground.

The crowd cheered for the two mares at the brilliant display. Trixie seemed to glare angrily, but recomposed herself.

>"You call yourselves twins, all I see are two bumbling lovers" <p>

The unicorn showmare used her magic and began to summon up some of her own concoctions; the contents of both similar to the two Chili sisters, the bottles unleashed a rigid semi-liquid matter which snaked around and twisted around the feet of the two sisters who were dazed by the confusing display. Then the unicorn brought the liquids up and began a mini-tornado which engulfed the two and sent them into an embarrassing display of 'sisterly' love where both were tied up in an awkward angle.

The crowd laughed and cheered the girls off for trying, both blushing immensely as the stage ponies got them down.

James wasn't impressed, such low blow tactics for entertainment, which meant that this poor mare was suffering from attention deficit disorder or had an ego the size of a 25km UCAF super cruiser. He continued to watch in absent amusement of how this pony got her kicks and thrills from making other ponies look bad.

The next up was a colt named Piper Pat who had a rather nice looking piper and began a wonderful tune to which everyone was attuned to so closely, his music made everyone clap for him and a few clops. He was then deftly humiliated by Trixie who used the air and blowed some sort of hypnotizing sound which made Pat dance like a fool and trip off the stage.

That got a lot of boos from the crowd at Trixie for that going even lower, the poor colt was young, not to mention actually talented. She didn't care though; she waited for the next challengers.

Another colt by the name of Juggles came up on stage, he was also travelling and had just started his career on the road, and he was a rather cheery character which everyone liked. And he could juggle a lot of things, and made amazing structures from things he could juggle. He made 6 pyramids from rectangular pyramids and did it while still juggling with one hand.

It was an impressive feat nonetheless and Trixie made it personal to take her frustrations out on the poor colt by making his pyramids fall on him and then lift him up on top of a triangular spire which then as soon as it was finished collapsed and brought the poor colt down as well.

The crowd felt sorry for the young traveller. Skyline said that Trixie was utterly sadistic in the sense of treating others without much respect and only giving them heartache or humiliation. But few could stand up to her, as they had to challenge her in a fair duel, as loose as that term seemed.

The next ponies up were the Magic Maestro Brothers, Bach and Brahms got up with their instruments and began a two pony band that got everyone's attention; it was a definite display of professionalism from the two who got everyone's attention. Then as they finished up with a duet, Trixie got to work, she turned the drums into one massive gong and sent the two shaking along.

It was then that Trixie said.

>"Oh woe for these poor foals, I'd rather pick a random challenger from the crowd below. Anyone dare to take on the Trixie?"<p>

Ponies were reluctant, but not James, he stepped forward without a word and got everyone's attention. He strolled so quietly he seemed like a ghost; murmurs came from the crowd about who the challenger was. As he stepped onto the stage, the magician asked unimpressed.

>"What are you supposed to be?"<p>

"Call me Whitetail the spirit of the free." He replied with a curt bow.

"Very well Whitetail, why don't you show us your amazing spirit abilitiesâ€|" She punctuated with a yawn.

She was trying to provoke him, which really didn't work for a helldiver like him, he was calm and patient and a damn good sniper to say the least. He picked her out, a 5'5 female wearing long thigh height boots and blue shorts with a tank top which brought her figure out. She had a cape and a magician's hat which acted like a morale booster to her ego or something close considering how much she flicked it around her with care.

He replied.

>"And so I shall."<p>

He tossed the cloak around him and activated his stealth fields where he vanished in the blink of an eye. The crowd gasped, there hadn't been any sort of proper invisibility attempt and most of the time it was a bit obvious for ponies to notice the feet or trapdoors. But this being just vanished and Trixie yawned.

>"Boooring."<p>

She tossed a bag of flour and covered the area around where Whitetail had vanished, but her attempt was in vain, the stalker class stealth fields were known to faze a person out of visual recognition, and it could discriminate against the particles of dust in the air, which was how it managed to be so useful in situations.

The dust cleared and Trixie was still not impressed.

>"How long can you attempt to hide from me? A trapdoor or a silly gimmick?"<p>

"How about neither?" Said a voice from behind her.

She turned and saw a surprising sight, the ghostly shimmer of Whitetail was behind her and she stumbled a little in surprise. The being was shimmering in light wisps and had glowing eyes that made everyone gasp in surprise.

>"I said I was a spirit didn't I?"<p>

"Ha! Spirit my flank!" She summoned her confidence and stuck her hand though the being.

She went right through the being, which made her stumble a bit and went.

>"What?"<p>

"I said it again, I'm a spirit, either you accept it or not, doesn't make a big deal to me." He said walking away.

"All I see is an illusion!" She brought out a little spell of lightning and zapped the image.

White faded, but then she heard the voice again.

>"How about, a deception?"<p>

She jumped forwards as White was suddenly standing behind her, and then another came from her side.

>"Or should I say multiplication?"<p>

Another and another appeared, until 5 were standing around the magician who hit them all with a blast of air, and sent them into oblivion, she huffed.

>"You can't keep this up!"<p>

"But I can!" Said a deep and ominous voice.

Trixie turned to see the cloak now black with a skull face which glowed bright white with 4 red eyes glared at her and then engulfed her. She screamed and then felt the cloak wrap around her, and she fell backwards in terror and found herself cowering. And then nothing happened, she looked around in confusion as the cloak returned to normal, but she was oddly missing something.

She blushed and grasped the cloak as she realised she had become nude. Everyone jeered at her in laughter at the predicament she had gotten herself into. And that was when White reappeared with her cape and said.

>"You should know better Moxie; no one makes a fool out of me!"<p>

The mare blushed brightly and then simmered.

XXXXXX

AN: that's all folks, for now at least.

I do need submissions for the OCs done by today though, please submit today your character bio; I'd like to add in more anthro characters. For the future of the story!

6. Chapter 6

CH6

Drawn to the Dawn

XXXXXX

Location: Evergreen District

Time: 2:12 PM

James walked around with Skyline; he was cheered as he headed to the library where Sky lived. His countering of Trixie and her humiliation had lifted everyone's mood; they jeered her off the stage when she finally got changed out of his cloak. Ponies believed that Whitetail was a spirit for sure, they too were frightened, but not as much as they laughed at the magician who had they had to tolerate. Trixie finally learned her lesson not to keep acting so superior, when others could easily outmatch her.

James was heralded as a hero, and ponies in Evergreen seemed to spread news rather fast, Ponies handed him flowers and small tokens of thanks for dealing with the troublesome mage. As they headed to the library past the alchemist, a large bulky called to James.

>"You there Whitetail, was it?" The buffalo asked.<p>

"Yes." James answered.

"You have impressive stealth skills, but you are no spirit, for I can sense true spirits. And you do not show the signs or markings, and I possess a scrying orb, one that can wash the natural from the unnatural, you show up as neither normal nor spiritual." Wild One produced a deep blue orb.

James knew that he couldn't really tell what this being was talking about, but he was sure that Wild One knew how to find him.

>"I'm not from here as you can tell, and I do admit that calling me a sort of spirit wouldn't be correct, but that doesn't mean I cannot go by such a guise can I?"<p>

Wild one blinked and said.

>"Of course you can, I merely wanted to say that you have exceptional skills at hiding, and I do wish to give you this gift of appreciation to deal with that silly mare." He handed James a vial.<p>

"What is it?" James asked.

"A rare concoction from the deserts around Appleloosa, Desert Dew, it will be of aid when you travel the deserts of my home, as it keeps the body well above tolerable against the harsh conditions of the barren lands. And its orange flavoured." He finished.

"Thanks." James replied to the gift.

The large buffalo headed off leaving Skyline and James to continue on their way to the library, they arrived a few minutes later at the steps to the front door. Skyline unlocked the door and James followed her in through the large oak doors, the first floor which he had been only for a moment was rather interesting now that he could see it without rushing.

Large oak like wooden shelves and cases were everywhere, there was also a counter at the front, it had a small computer and some calendars metal filing cabinets and some keys. At the back were the rooms to the rear entrance to the library and the cleaning cabinet and maintenance room, and what he assumed was a restoration facility for older books. Skyline headed off behind her terminal and began to check on something's.

"You can take a look around on the other floor as well; just don't go into my room like last time." She shot a look at James.

James didn't need another warning, he had seen her before. "I understand." He replied.

He walked away from the mare and walked through the library, he found a door to the left wing of the library, and it had a computer sign on it. As he entered he found that there was a small computer room, he exited and headed over to the right side of the library and found a quiet reading section, and a private study isle.

He headed upstairs shortly and began to take a proper look around. The room above was one patented for the library custodian/keeper, it was a home made for them to live within, with or without others, and there were 4 bedrooms, small and probably made for guests, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, laundry room, dining room and one living room. The whole level was made for a family, which only raised the question. Why was Skyline living here alone?

James decided to withhold his question for a later time; he finished looking around and decided to head up the next level. The other level was rather interesting, when he came through here the last time it had many windows, and for a good reason as well, he entered into one room and noticed that it was rather dark, when he activated his lowlight vision he could see what there was.

A large machine assembled underneath a sky roof, the shutters above were closed so that no one could enter and also stopped light from entering into the room, and he could see that this machine was some sort of reflector. There was a brake nearby and he grasped the handle and pulled it to the other side that began the movement of a pulley which then opened the shutters, but also started up the machine.

The large device unfolded and peeled open like a flower as the sky roof gave way for it, as it blossomed he could see the beauty of the machine in front of him. It was a solar sail, one that stretched around the corner of the library, its material shimmering in the sun

warmly; he wondered what purpose it served, it was then that Skyline arrived from down below.

"Oh so that's what the ruckus was." She commented and went over to him.

"I guess you found the sun sail project." She continued as she began to pull and some ropes.

"What is this for?" James inquired.

"A special project my grandfather came up with, he always loved to feel the warmth of the sun, passed away some years ago, and left me with the library. The solar sails here were made as a gift for me and others, it was meant to catch light and bounce and absorb it so we can use it to power the town and further develop it, but sadly due to lack of support in the sun sail project ponies gave up on it. Only passing tourists who come here every half a year only come for the sun shifts, because the light causes the sails to emit a beautiful glow across the dawn." She sounded rather sombre of the memories and he could tell that this item before her was deeply meaningful.

It was then that she pulled the brakes back and another lever and watched as the machine closed up and the whole machine folded back up.

>"I think dinner time's coming up soon enough, you want to eat out?" She asked.<p>

"I think I might have to return to the jungle soon enoughâ€|" He replied thoughtfully.

She had a disheartened look and replied.

>"Ohâ€|"<p>

"But I think I will stay for dinner." He told her.

"Really?" She said in a hopeful tone.

"Yes." He replied.

She was about to jump in joy, but held her enthusiasm and said. "Okay then, I better get changed, we'll get something taken out from the Neighpon store down the road." She hurried off.

XXXXX

Location: Canterlot

Time: 12:09 PM

Ponies gathered for noon tea, it was rather a fascinating spectacle as Pinkie Pie went over to make the pastry and the beverages, she was rather insistent on it and also asked to borrow the royal kitchens for an hour or so, so now they just needed to wait for the pink pony to finish her baking and come back to the room. So now we move on from there to the girls who wereâ€|

"BAM"

>A pink blur entered the room with a large silver trolley and tray and yelled. "Who wants cake and tea?" She asked everyone.<p>

Now that I've been smacked aside by that very door to the front lens, might I add that the computer doesn't come with a 1 year warranty and it's a pain to get it fixed?

>"Oh silly don't worry about the front screen, you should be worried about the cupcakes!" The pony replied cheerily absent to the fact that everypony was wondering what she was doing speaking to a wooden owl which had been perched atop of a stool.<p>

"Pinkie who are you talking to?" Twilight asked from her chair.

>Twilight had a change of clothes from the incident as she had been in a rather nasty mess, she now had a rather waistless shirt which was form fitting and a pair of blue pants on which was also form fitting and all of it was suggested by Rarity.<p>

"Oh it's just the author Twilight, don't worry, he's just grumpy I messed up his camera angle. So what've you been up to?" She asked pulling off the tray of cupcakes and placing them on the coffee table with a flick of her wrist.

Rarity replied.

>"Not much Pinkie dear, we have been discussing the intricate knowledge of what this alien carried with him, however Twilight cannot recall what she saw properly, and we've been trying to come up with a reason why."<p>

Twilight interjected. "Actually it's not why I can't recall the memories, its more that I shouldn't recall them, from the alien, who I actually know as a person named Miguel, he's had things rather bad, and Celestia sent me a message this morning warning me to not talk or recall those things until she and Luna can attend to us."

"Right, because we don't need you going nuts again and nearly sending us all flying over the room again." Dash commented.

Applejack threw the Pegasus a glare and said.

>"We need the princesses to help out on what we've learned, and I think it's good to be sure."<p>

Fluttershy nodded with Rarity agreeing.

>"As long as we're all given an understanding to what we've seen that's enough for me. Not to mention I do want to look at his clothes, he has an interesting sense of clothing."<p>

It was then that the doors opened, Princess Luna arrived with a box in her hands and a pair of glasses on her head and a number of other items she was carrying. She hurried over and placed the objects down and then greeted them all.

>"Good to see that you have all had time to rest, and it is a welcome sight to see that you are well Twilight."<p>

Twilight thanked her for her concern. Luna then began.

>"Now I know that you had looked at some objects that the alien had possessed, however I and Celestia believe that this would be the opportunity to go into more depth of detail for specific items."<p>

"Because I know what they are?" Twilight asked the princess.

Luna and the others looked at her. Luna was rather surprised; she didn't know that Twilight would catch on so easily.

>"Y-yes, Celestia explained that you have been able to delve into the mind of the alien, you had also learnt more about it than any of us here, and you should be able to determine the objects present and help reveal their purposes."<p>

Twilight nodded, it was understandable, they needed to know what they were looking at, and Twilight had gotten to know more about them than anyone present.

>"Very well, but I'd rather take it slowly."<p>

Luna nodded; she carefully brought out the first item. It was a strange card, it was rectangular but had a certain thickness to it, and a clear cut hole was in the middle with what looked like a crystal, it made the others wonder when this object was found.

>"We found this after the incident, it was sticking out loosely from the skull of the alien, and we believe that the alien's body must have ejected it once Twilight exited from its mind."<p>

Twilight was the first to look at it, she could see the outlines of the card, the intricate lines that were engraved upon it and the crystal centre glowed luminously white. It was a beautiful yet dangerous thing. She knew what it was.

>"This is a neural interface card, it was made specifically by the military organisation of this being's race to record combat information and also to interface with a sort of hive network like our internet, but on a greater scale that encompasses whole star systems and possibly even further."<p>

The girls were surprised at how casually Twilight spoke about the object and how direct, it was a like listening to a computer just spouting back the words that was typed into it. Twilight put the object down and looked at the next item; it was a small black box, the size of about 2 mobile phones (Think Motorola 2009 models).

The object seemed rather smooth and hadn't seemed to have any obvious signs of interface, but Twilight knew what it was, she pressed exactly in the bottom of the object and then twisted and the box suddenly clicked open, it revealed a small housing for other objects, what looked like a tool kit, objects like small spanners or attachable screw heads and pins. It was made for field work.

>"Maintenance kit for the troops, it wasn't made for much aside for repairing damaged gear. It was also used to crack open enemy machines and help deal with interfacing non-solid computers."<p>

She placed the toolbox away and then looked into the objects and pulled some bits of what looked like fabric, a coat of arms on one of the bits of fabric made her pause. She then placed it down in a neat pile next to the other pieces, she then looked again and pulled out a circular disk like object, it was 4 layers thick and had multiple pieces of joining rings which held it together. It had a single glass orb in the middle and on closer inspection the glass had strange little shapes inside, it was like someone had made it with wires.

Twilight recalled this item as well.

>"This is a personal projector, it's meant to be like some sort of entertainment system or computer."<p>

Rainbow exclaimed.

>"That's awesome, so it's like one of those projector things that get used in cinemas?"<p>

"Sort of, but I think it's got to do with 3D projections, because it isn't like a flat image, it's something more complex. I really can't recall too much about this, but it does have to do something like 3D" She looked at the object and tried to think about how it turned on.

Her memories soon found the ridges of buttons on the rim of the disk, she keyed in the activation code and then it activated, it was like doing this a million times, even though she had never done it before, she guess that it had something to do with taking in the memories of Miguel.

>"Bring up main files, start-up standard mainframe." She said directly.<p>

The others were about to ask what she did when the object began to glow, she laid it on the floor in front of her and watched as the projection came to life, the others gasped in surprise at the sight of the image. Glimmering lights displayed a net of boxes which stretched over the whole screen, and then the image glowed in the centre which displayed a crisscross of boxes highlighted, it was a surprising sight for sure.

She watched as the box cleared away and the screen changed, it loaded a panel of 9, 3 by 3. It was a strange thing, the others were baffled by the difference of language and could only see similar like writing to their own, but it didn't make much sense in terms of the characters. Twilight could see all of it though, she ran her hand over to the settings on the computer and then began to locate the language translator, and she hit the button to decipher her words.

"Language Protocol, NA-A1 though to A10, Decrypt." She ordered.

The others wondered what she said to the machine, but it was apparent that she knew what she was doing. The machine ran the changes and adapted them; everyone could then see the writing, it was as clear as day. Luna inquired.

>"Twilight how much do you know about this alien's technology?"<p>

"I don't know, I just unconsciously just say it, it's like being born with the knowledge, it's so strange, but it works at least." She replied.

The others weren't so sure about how much Twilight knew, but it was at least it was working, the machine responded to them properly now. She flicked through the programs as if she had done it a million times before, and sensed something familiar with the word archives.

>"Access public archives."<p>

The screen changed to green and then it revealed everything in neat piles, history and education to the years of science, the sight was amazing, as it had over 2000 stores of data on all of the areas. Twilight was intrigued, but she didn't dare open anything just yet,

her head was still recovering from her last trip from curiosity and she'd rather wait and see if anything changes in the time.

She returned to the main screen and said.

>"I think we might want to hold off on doing anything till tomorrow."<p>

Luna and the others were confused.

>"Why?"<p>

"I don't feel great at the moment; I'd rather wait a little bit longer." Twilight evaded.

The other girls knew when something was wrong, but they had to give her the benefit of the doubt she had gone through something rather traumatic only a short time ago. They agreed and Luna gave them time to go and get some rest of time off, they'd reconvene the next afternoon as soon as Twilight felt better and possibly when Celestia might take time off from the court to come and see them.

Twilight thanked the Luna princess and headed off, she needed time to think. And she'd spend that time with the alien, she knew that visiting him wouldn't probably improve what's happened, but she just wanted to know if anything was different. She had to knowâ€|

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Time: Offline

Location: Unknown

Status: Neural Reboot procedure underway, time est. 5 seconds.

Rebooting neural systems nowâ€| warning neural card has been removed. Alter mainframe to backup neural index and then restart, program underwayâ€| completed, neural backup restored and program initiated. BIOS check, POST check, readyâ€| BOOT initiated. The neural cards came to life, his memories were mostly intact, but without a proper neural card in place he had lost his quantum processor and thus the boot was going to be a slower process than what it would have been with a quantum card still in his head.

But the emergency program knew what to do, if it wasn't for the fact that the card had been removed it might have never woken the marine up, but stasis wouldn't have been the smartest thing the neural processor could have thought about. Once the POST and BIOS cleared up, the marine's body began to check if everything was ready and set.

'All neural pathways are clear, no sign of memory loss, warning, energy surge at point 3122 may have compromised neural circuitry in frontal lobe, detection of no damage to frontal lobe, beginning emergency stimulation in 30 seconds.' The internal neural computer stated.

Miguel could feel all of his memories and dreams pass through, his body began to check if everything was in place, he felt nothing was wrong, just sore. He then felt his eyes, his hearing and his touch

come back; he opened his eyes and found darkness. He couldn't see anything except the low hum of machines and a slow beeping noise, it made sense, his heart stimulation was unlikely to happen just from a wakeup call, the only thing that'd get him really up and going would be something more ambiguous.

His eyes began to adjust as he got up, his augmentations from years in service also included low light vision, his eyes began to adjust to the low light and made out what was in front of him, it looked like a hospital, but not one that he'd seen before in real life, medical beds and sheets in shelves. He could see the heart rate monitor and the many other arcane instruments of medicine lying around; this was definitely not an alliance hospital, but more an old style hospital like the ones in the border colonies of Tysis.

He didn't have much to complain about, his pod had hit higher resistance on impact and he had been knocked out by the sheer impact of hitting the ground, he did recall something in his legs breaking and his shoulder and collar bones. He grasped his shoulder and leg and found that both were now healed, his biological augmentations had probably dealt with them.

He climbed out of the medical bed and removed the wires and tubes, as soon as he heard the flat line noise, he hurried over and began to search for his clothes, he checked 3 draws and found what was left of his clothes, only the pulse resistant suit and his jacket was all that he could find, he also pulled out one thing that was overlooked, his hidden assault gauntlets.

The gauntlets hadn't much to look at, but when worn and activated they'd be able to hold onto almost anything, they had enhancers, and one glove had a hidden dagger and the other had a 12 round magazine of 11mm bullets integrated pistol. It wasn't hard to see why these gauntlets were called assault gauntlets.

Miguel made his way to the door as he heard noise from outside, he had to blink as the lights came on and the door began to hiss open, he moved out of sight and waited at the door, as soon as it swung open a pair of aliens rushed in, they came upon the sight of the empty bed, and then they saw Miguel as he reached out and grabbed them.

He knew the human body and from what these beings looked like, they were human like enough, he jabbed with precision force into one nurse's throats and she collapsed into unconsciousness and the other shouted in surprise, he put his hand around a pressure point and then dropped her down as well. Both aliens incapacitated he exited the room; he could hear the sounds of panic as more aliens rushed down hallways into the medical wing.

He rushed down hallways to wherever his instincts told him to go, his head was a bit slow seeing as he didn't have his neural card, which meant that he was operating with both sides of his brain but unable to function it to peak efficiency. He still did have his incredible reflexes and reaction so he didn't need to worry too much about his neural card at the moment.

He passed another corridor, but as luck would have it he ran into trouble, 4 aliens were in full armour at the end of the corridor he had run into, he didn't slow down though, he rushed forwards at full

tilt and got up and close and personal with them in moments. He threw his weight into his first attack and dented the armour of the nearest guard; the poor stallion never knew what hit him.

Miguel threw another punch and rammed his fist into the second guard and dropped him from the punch, he grabbed the third and lifted him upwards and tossed him into the last guard knocking them both down, Miguel didn't waste time as he rushed onwards through the door of the next room and into the depths of the facility.

He found himself running deeper into another level and when he entered into this section, he found out where he was. He entered into a room filled with body bags and wrecked UCAF vehicles, he could see dozens of body bags with the tags of marines he knew, he could name almost all of them. He wasn't saddened by the sight, he was remorseful for those who had gone and died in the years since he joined.

He ignored the bodies and got going again, he found the exit to the next section and hurried into an open chamber of what looked like glowing gems, he didn't bother looking around; he could hear more guards rushing into wing. He dashed across wing to where he could see a possible escape route, or one that'd lead him straight into a group of aliens.

He found that his instincts were right on the point, he found his way into a room that headed upwards, he was rewarded with the sight of the top of a mountain looking downwards, he was currently in some sort of mountain facility, that was for sure, the only problem he had was that there was no exit here.

He rushed onwards to the next rooms and found his way to what looked like a loading bay, it was just over an open area where there were dozens of aliens milling about, and he decided to sneak around the whole mess of aliens. He made his way to the doors of the loading bay and avoided detection.

He made his way across a beam overhanging a section and found his way to a door where he assumed it was locked, and of course luck wasn't going to let him that well off, the door opened and an alien stepped in, her body froze as she saw him and then paused. Miguel didn't have many options; he bolted it for the alien and grabbed her.

The alien screamed loud enough to get the attention of the hangar, he grabbed the alien by the arm and pulled his own arm around its neck and pressed his pistol gauntlet to its neck and shouted.
>"Don't move!"<p>

The aliens seemed to have mixed reactions as they didn't understand what he said, but they understood what he was doing, he had one of theirs and he was threatening to harm her if they didn't back off. They alien guards gave him space as he slowly backed away with the alien to the loading bay doors.

He backed into the doors and opened them at the control panel, the doors slid open and revealed that no one was behind them, he continued to pull his hostage along, once he got onto the loading pad he realised that it was hanging above at the top of a building, there was a sharp 6 meter drop that he could see, but with all these guards, he doubted he'd escape that easily.

He decided to even the odds, he aimed high at the top of a crane that he could see, it held a box in its claws, he lifted his arm and fired 3 rounds, the bullets tore through the cables and dropped the box down, all the aliens had cleared well out of harm's way and the guards were distracted, Miguel dropped the alien hostage and ran to the edge of the platform and hit the lower level in moments.

He was in the courtyard of the facility and he began a full sprint to the gates of the facility, he could hear the shouts of many aliens on approach. He reached the gates where he saw 2 armed guards with rifles, he didn't waste time as he fired at their weapons, his 11mm rounds ripped their rifles apart with ease and he proceeded to kick them out of his way.

He grasped the gates and pulled himself over them, he was now outside of the facility in what he could see was an open street of a city of sorts, what amazed him was that there was civilians all around the area, he made his way through the streets to wherever he could find cover, or a place to recuperate.

However as he ran through the streets he found it harder to find a safe spot as he soon ran into plenty of civilian places, aliens screamed as he ran past, of course they'd scream he had the blood on his fists and arms, not to mention he himself had obvious differences from these aliens. He ran into a caf   where he was greeted by some waiter, he pushed by and ran through the fancy caf  .

Aliens all around stood up in shock others knocked back as he pushed through, he ended up at the back of a balcony next to a water fall, and it led down to the next couple of levels into the more urban sections of the city. He could see some rather aristocratic looking aliens who seemed to be shocked, appalled or simply curious to see him there.

He saw a blue haired male with a monocle and in a very expensive looking suit with a pink haired super model, she seemed to grasp his shoulder as Miguel went over and pulled the table cover from the table and tied it into a makeshift chute, he didn't want to break his legs again. He heard the noise of guards and this time they came from above.

He could see, winged aliens pointing at him, he would have assumed he was hallucinating if it wasn't for the fact that he needed to escape, but what also caught his attention was the 9 aliens in skin tight suits rushing at him. He didn't waste any more time and vaulted the balcony and downwards to the next level of the city.

He didn't seem to have much luck on escaping the sights of the flying aliens; they chased his makeshift parachute as it made its descent to the ground, he got about halfway to the next level when they made their move, a sleek looking female made her move and got behind him, she tried to grab his legs and another 3 made their move to grab him from all around.

He kicked and knocked back, and then he knocked one male and he flew into his parachute, the grasp of the chute was torn from his grasp, he dropped into the waterfalls' grasp and he went down in a sharp pull to the aqueduct below. He hit the water with his feet down. When he breached the water he saw another thing that'd probably confuse

him further, aliens with tails and fins smiling and laughing now looking at him in surprise.

He didn't know how much more his head could take before he began to think he was truly messed up or delusional, he pulled himself out of the water and onto a wall of the aqueduct, he pulled himself up and was then greeted by the sounds of dozens of armoured feet, dozens of aliens rushed in, they surrounded him from the air and the ground, he thought how many he could take on.

He didn't have enough time to go start the largest punch out in the history of Equestria as a sudden burst of light dropped a young alien in front of him. She had purple skin and purple eyes, they glimmered so warmly, she looked at him and then he knew her, she was from his dreams. She reached out and grasped his face and her horn glowed.

He didn't feel anything else afterwards.

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Now this is quite serious, but as a question from one reader, he'd wonder if I should add tails, now about the tails, I need a vote, and someone willing to help me go over my work, as in if you can just adjust a few scenes and suggest where else the tails might be noticed just tell me so I can edit sections.

But first the vote, would you rather I leave them without tails, which means they're neko's anyway in a more direct fashion, because they aren't necessarily horse like at all, and people have been bringing that up, but the term still does kind of fit them, so I don't know. You guys need to tell me.

7. Chapter 7

CH7

Heliacal

XXXXX

AN: We're getting hotter and hotter with each passing chapter, and soon more is to come, which I might add the UCAF is going to start probably the largest war on the face of the planet in about 2 chapters more.

And yeah we have our elite loyalist enemies and allies coming into play soon enough, just for a plot twistâ€¦

XXXXX

Time: Unknown

Location: Unknown

Zaro dropped from the tops of another tree top, he had scouted from the highest point of this forest to see if he could find Rebas' camp nearby, and they had heard of their random bursts of transmissions that they had touched down nearly 40kms from their own landing site. Zaro was determined to link up with his fellow warriors to rally

against their delusional brothers.

He landed next to his second in command.

>"We are not far, but it seems that the trail maybe a little cold. Our brother's markings suggest that they've headed on further north."<p>

"This complicates things." His second in command replied.

"Yes, if they head further north we might lose their communications frequency in the winds above in the heights. Can you determine if we might find an alternate route around those mountains?" Zaro asked.

His second looked at his mappers and began searching the zones, he shook his head.

>"If we were to take an alternate route it may take weeks to traverse the distance, the only way to keep up with the others would be to cut across those mountains, or we may fall behind."<p>

Zaro didn't like this, he had his experiences of the cold on the UCAF warzones and he'd rather not be in an unfamiliar place looking for his fellow brothers only to get ambushed or killed in accidents. He had little choice though; he'd lose the window of opportunity to rally his brothers to get to the UCAF and prepare against the threat of Vesdarea and his loyalist followers.

The zealot would stop at nothing to come hunting them all down. Zaro got to work on selecting a path; they'll need time to get the right equipment and supplies before they began the treacherous hike to the mountain tops.

XXXXXX

Location: Canterlot: Cyrene Complex

Time: 1:41 PM

Twilight had come back to the complex to check up on Miguel, she hadn't been so sure of what she had seen in his mind, but her curiosity and concern for the alien, human, grew. She had known that the being was in some sort of stasis, she could distinctly recall something from the scattered memories of what was said to him.

She was determined to get back to Miguel and try and see if he was awake now. She passed into the medical ward when things went wrong.

>"Emergency in Chamber Alpha, code-red containment breach, repeat containment breach, all personnel to Chamber Alpha!"<p>

Twilight broke into a run, she knew that if there was a containment breach then it was most likely that Miguel must have woken up, he'd probably just as confused as she was when she saw into his mind, but the difference was that he was awake and he was dangerous. She knew what he was capable of doing and she was determined not to let him hurt others and others to hurt him, he was just following his protocols for survival.

She rushed towards the ward and arrived at the scene where a few guards were helping up the unconscious nurses, they yelled orders to

begin the sweep for Miguel. Twilight didn't waste any time, she thought carefully and made the correct adjustments to her magical abilities, she then used the spell that Rarity had told Spike about and she had learnt when her friend was taken by the diamond dogs to their cave lairs.

She summoned her magic and sent a pulse to search for the alien body amongst the natural environment, she felt him, and he was fast, rushing to a haphazard escape route. She focused and teleported some distance from him and soon found herself in a janitor's closet, she opened the door and followed the trail after Miguel.

She had some difficulty with magic ever since the encounter with Miguel, but that was probably because her magic hadn't fully been restored, she was still in need of recovery, but she wouldn't allow Miguel to harm anypony or himself. She chased after his trail on foot and prepared to teleport as close as she could to him when she had the strength to.

It wasn't until he reached the courtyard that she really needed to hurry; it was then that she also ran into the others. Princess Luna and Celestia appeared, the girls followed behind with a vast array of questions as to what was going on.

>"Twilight what happened down here?" Rarity asked.<p>

"Miguel's gotten loose; he's made it into the city!" Twilight replied with gasping breaths as she took a moment to recover from chasing the human.

Celestia's face turned into a frown of concern and began to summon her magic; she stopped her magic and then said.

>"We must get to Miguel as soon as possible; I've alerted the local guards and the Wonderbolts to seize him as soon as possible." She told them.<p>

"Wait a moment what's so bad about him getting into the city?" Rainbow asked.

"Because he'd cause all sorts of trouble, has anypony reacted well in the past to strange new things popping out of thin air?" Twilight replied.

They all nodded, the chances were there'd be wide spread panic at the sight of the 6'1ft alien with strange clothing and physique, he didn't look anything like a pony, no tail or cutie mark or unique colour, not to mention he was covered in blood. Celestia summoned her magic and then began to teleport them.

"Where exactly are we going?" Twilight asked.

"To the place where the guards are about to surround him, this will take only a moment longer." Celestia replied.

The magic from Celestia's horn grew as the focus continued to trace the alien to the edge of a café and down a waterfall into the local aqueduct. It was then that Miguel was tackled by the Wonderbolts that Celestia zeroed in on his location; she pushed out with her magic and teleported them there directly.

Twilight ended up directly in front of Miguel, and on reaction she

grabbed him, her hands planted on his wet cheeks and her magic focused into his mind, and then she reached for him.

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Miguel felt the mare enter into his mind, this time he was awake and he could recall her intrusion last time, how she stumbled into the core of his soul and stared into the oblivion within his heart, she had opened a doorway few had done so before and there was a reason why. Because they wanted to understand, him and his pain, but Twilight had stumbled into the pit by accident an unintentional mistake which almost cost her, her sanity.

But being here now, she couldn't access those memories again, and Miguel wasn't willing to open up like that again. This time they were in the one place that he could find peace, and where she could communicate with him properly. Miguel brought them together in his home, his place of sanctuary and peace, the one place he had found hope.

Location: Miguel's Soul- Event Solace

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The sounds of silence were so loud, and yet peaceful, he had to admit that this was the one place he could find a moment's reprieve when he needed to. He sat on the metal bench aboard the Event Solace, a UCAF transport ship which he had been on when he was evacuated from his homeworld so many years ago.

The transport was large for being a transport, but that was usually with the whole of UCAF ships and military, large scale and numerous. He had his eyes closed and his head lying back when he felt someone tap his shoulder. He opened his eyes and found the purple skinned alien from his memory, the same one who managed to wake him from his coma, and the one who seemingly decided to dive into his brain.

"So we meet at last." He said to her with a small smile.

The purple skinned young woman returned the smile and said.
>"Yeah, I guess we do finally get to meet face to face, instead of you know."<p>

Miguel was rather passive on appearance and he did scrutinise whoever he met with a close eye before making a judgement. And he could see that this young woman hadn't really too much interaction with the opposite gender, she looked rather more secluded, but she was trying to get to know him, so he returned the gesture.

"First impressions always last, but I can understand where you're trying to come from, doesn't worry about the mishaps that happen, as long as it doesn't happen again, I think we can work around that." He replied.

"Oh okayâ€|" She said with a slightly brightened expression. Then there was a brief pause, which did seem a little awkward.

Miguel decided to try and start further conversation.
>"I can tell that you being here means that you wanted to speak with me in person, and you do seem to know me, which has me at a little

bit of a loss as to who you areâ€| "<p>

Twilight understood what Miguel meant and properly introduced herself.

>"Oh sorry, I'm Twilight Sparkle; Student to Princess Celestia, the ruler of the kingdom in which you are currently in and you did see her before. I live in Ponyville where I learn the magic of friendship and study further magic to improve my knowledge and knowledge for all ponykind."<p>

Miguel knew that she knew him, but manners were something he did retain even though being thrown in with the nastiest bunch of soldiers in existence. "Okay well Twilight Sparkle, I am Miguel Dean, Major of the UCAF 81st Helldivers. I have served for years fighting against a relentless enemy which has threatened my people for nearly 30 years and I have served without a moment's reprieve, at least physically."

Twilight did recall a few things that she had seen, him so young battling wars in his lifetime, it was still a bit disturbing to her that she had seen him go through the process of destruction, everything that ripped away at his soul. She didn't comment, and she suspected that he knew that she had seen more than just a few flashbacks.

Miguel decided to drive the discussion in another direction.

>"Twilight I'm curious but how is that we've been able to talk in plain English?"<p>

Twilight didn't understand what he meant by English until she then understood what he meant by it, she replied.

>"I mind linked us and shared my own memories, I guess I should say that I added all of my people's vocabulary into your mind, so we aren't necessarily speaking in your language we're speaking in mine."<p>

"Ah, that explains how I suddenly understand the triple meaning to buckingâ€| " He commented airily.

Twilight blushed at the comment and sheepishly replied.

>"I might have put too much information in there."<p>

Miguel smiled for a moment and then said.

>"Don't worry I think we both can act like adults about that. Besides who knew that you liked Rainbows and Sunshine?"<p>

"Oh you mean by that strange album inspired by Pinkie Pie? I do remember that song, I don't know is how she managed to get a camera and a recording microphone when no one else had one, or the fact that she recorded it without any of us seeing itâ€| that shocked Applejack when she got like a thousand fan messages about her song." Twilight said with a bit of confusion.

Miguel sat there and then asked.

>"You know, I ask this to only those who I trust most, but do you know why we're here?"<p>

Twilight looked at him and replied.

>"I think it was either some sort of cosmic coincidence, or possibly

the great creator of everything, seriously though I never really thought about it."<p>

Miguel nodded.

>"True, not many people do think about such things anymore, unless you're a philosopher. But who knows? That or that silly rumour made by the UCAF priest, I think his name was Bishop, he commented that everything was made by the chaos of a pink blob causing a chain reaction that supposedly created the big bang, I mean it's ridiculous, how could a pink blob cause the creation of the universe?"<p>

They stopped talking and they looked at each at each other and laughed. The things that they talked about so trivial, the first meeting between two different races punctuated by laughter, it was the foundation for a good friendship. Miguel stopped laughing after a little while and then said.

>"I think it's time."<p>

"Already?"

"Yes, I don't think holding the others up with our mind link would be appropriate and I do need to speak with your mentor."

Twilight understood, the mind link began to fade and the two faded back out.

XXXXX

Location: Canterlot- Infirmary

Time: 1:44 PM

Miguel could hear the soft beeping of a monitor checking on his pulse, he could still feel the ache in his back, rushing through streets and landing in a waterfall wasn't exactly what he wanted, but he managed to elude them until he was surrounded. He had never wanted to forget that day again, the one of the best days to mark in his lifetime, being able to finally talk to someone without having the formalities of military standard or some other rule, the only problem was that was inside his head.

He cracked his eyes open very slowly and then began to focus on the world around him, he was in a hospital room, or an atrium if the ceiling was high enough, but it seemed that he was alive. At least in the sense he knew that was physical, he felt exhausted physically, what had happened since the meeting? He and Twilight met and they talked and then their conversation went on for a while with random discussions; they cut their connection in the end to wake up.

Her ability to enter into his mind felt different from the last time, as she had done it when he was unconscious, and then this time it felt like she had gone and made a smoother transition, which was good as he didn't feel disorientated. She had delved into his mind without his permission sure, but it remained a puzzle why she'd bother going in there, but that was her decision, the only thing he was rather confused about was why he let her go so far. He'd get his answers soon enough once he figured out what was going on. He lifted his head from the bed pillow, it was surprisingly soft, not like the medical wards on UCAF vessels or field bases, and they had the most

uncomfortable pressure pillows which hurt to lie on for more than an hour.

He slowly observed what was in the room around him, he spotted the windows, curtains and the strange pair of aliens which were not too far away, and then he spotted her. The purple alien from before was lying not too far away, she was on a bed next to him, he was sure that she wasn't here as a patient.

It was then a blue skinned nurse arrived, her red cross with 4 questions marks in each corner on her hat indicated that she might have something to do with medical investigations, or something similar. She noticed that he was awake and called over on a microphone.

>"Nurse Clear Heart to Doctor Flummoxed, please report to Room 49, patient has recovered. Please inform Princess Celestia that patient has recovered." The nurse said through a microphone.<p>

In moments a chime ran across the facility where he was being held, and also he noted that Twilight who had been resting soon woke from the announcement, she was baffled at what was going on and then found her way over to him. She then realised what was going on. She rushed over and greeted Miguel.

>"You're awake!"<p>

"Yes I am awake, but why am I tied down?" He asked.

Twilight took a step back and replied.

>"Princess Celestia decided to have you buckled down with as much restraint as possible, you did escape from one of Equestria's most secure facilities and injure over half a dozen guards and knock the wonderbolts silly. Not to mention terrorize half of Canterlot."<p>

He recalled his rush through the streets and he did admit that was probably true orâ€|

>"Are you absolutely sure that your mentor doesn't have a bondage fetish?"<p>

Twilight took a step back blushing furiously and defensively said.

>"NO, Miguel I'm pretty sure that I'd know if she had such a thingâ€| It doesn't seem like her anyway."<p>

At that moment the princess walked into the room, Miguel could remember her, a pastel coloured mane that seemed to glitter in endless rainbows, her body was albino white which seemed to radiate light around it, it was of no surprise to him, he had seen his fair share of oddities in the wars and meeting an alien strangely humanoid with physics defying magic and some other unique abilities with the body of a goddess which would get the attention of every other male.

He was thankful for being so dulled down by years of timid work or he'd have gone with a goofy smile of a kid, which would make him feel rather embarrassed. Twilight got off the bed and bowed to her mentor and greeted her.

>"Princess Celestia, I'm happy to say that Miguel is feeling better."<p>

"Thank you Twilight although it isn't necessary for the explanation I'm sure that the major would like to speak by himself." Celestia replied.

Miguel spoke up.

>"Yes, I think it would be prudent to start introductions, also my apologies if I cannot bow, I seemed to be a little tied downâ€¦" He wrung at his restraints. "Whose idea was this anyway?"<p>

Celestia blushed when she said.

>"A necessary precaution."<p>

"Are you sure handcuffs wouldn't have been better?" He asked.

"Well we didn't want you escaping again." Celestia answered.

It was then that the other girls arrived into the room, they hugged Twilight and started an array of questions about what was going on and seemed to make the room about as noisy as sticking one's head next to a Harley. When Miguel was about to kindly ask them to shut up a pink blur burst forth knocking over the yellow skinned one and the orange girls and zipping right over to him.

"SURPRISE! Happy Welcome to Equestria and You Woke Up From a Coma Surprise Party!" A pink girl said with such volume, it made Miguel actually flinch which was a very hard thing to do especially for him.

Miguel managed to strangle out a reply.

>"Umm thanks?"<p>

The pink fluffy haired hyperactive girl then produced a cake from almost thin air, which was astounding considering the sheer size of it was a small table, and also how did she manage to hold a cake that looks like it would weigh about 30 pounds with two hands? Did the pink girl have super human strength? Then again from the author's point of view, that answer would be a yes.

"Out of the way ED, I don't throw a party for you until November!" Pinkie said directly at the author, who happened to be a pot flower nearby the bed.

Before anyone could ask her what she was doing, Pinkie jumped back to Miguel and begun to sing.

>"Sooooo, welcome to Equestria I hope you like your stay, it's a wonderful day for me to say hip, hip hooray!"<p>

Meanwhile Miguel was busy being absolutely baffled by the pink party pony Twilight went over to the others and asked.

>"Is Pinkie going to break out the party cannon again?"<p>

XXXXXX

Location: Evergreen District

Time: 7:22 AM

The day started off pretty well, James got out from the guest bedroom and began his morning by going for a jog around the block till noon

and then get back to speak with Skyline about a future proposition for going out into the jungles in search of interesting artefacts, plants, animals, and the odd dangerous adventure.

James had initially been planning on remaining in his hideaway in the jungle but the mare had made it rather difficult as she had been determined to keep him close, close enough to grab him of course with her big puppy eye routine to help her accomplish her goals. In truth she was a rather astute woman, of sorts, being rather adventurous and inquisitive about what to do, and reading books when she wasn't being active.

Skyline was the kind of girl who got your attention but also gave you space, at least when it suited her needs, the other times would be him going after her because of her, but then again this was what she quoted, 'a working relationship'. Somehow he felt that this was going to be a very long stay in Evergreen.

During his morning jog James was greeted by many of the inhabitants of the town who seemed to like him a bit more now that they knew that he was a subtle quiet fellow who knew personal space, and a good challenge. But James kept to himself unless Skyline really wanted to bring him along for anything, it had been 3 days since his stay and he's found it more 'proactive' than what he would have been possible for such a place.

Needless to say he enjoyed the time he was here, even if he didn't necessarily show it or say it, he enjoyed the time he had off from his war, but he knew it wouldn't last, nothing ever does. With each passing day he had come closer and closer to fixing a straight beam transponder to his fellow marines and helldivers, he picked up on scattered UCAF transmissions in a region nearby, and thus he would only be able to stay with Skyline a little longer.

He'd hate to break the ice, but it needed to be done, the UCAF forces had gathered and were waiting for a rescue, and he couldn't stay here forever, it was his duty to go back into the war and it was his personal belief that it had to be done. But for now he'd enjoy his time with Skyline. As he rounded back into the library he was greeted by the mare making a batch of pancakes.

"Morning James, how's the weather?" She asked.

"About as good as it is really, I'm pretty sure that you already know of course." He replied.

"Well yeah, I do have the calendar, but I want your opinion." She said chirpily.

"Is this about your studies into different beings and different places?" He asked passively.

"Maybeâ€¦" She replied sheepishly.

"Well I think you might want to get a model and a chart to record it, because asking me every day won't provide a good record and I don't think asking me alone is also going to help, considering there's only me." He said with scrutiny to her research methods.

"True, but still better to understand at least one person's personal

opinion, and you said it yourself you're the only human I've met."
She had him cornered.

"Yes but I don't think you really need to ask me all the time." He
said with a internal sigh.

Skyline went on with getting the pancakes, she brought them onto the
table and James grabbed some cups and juice for both of them. He
asked.

>"Sky, you know I'm not going to be around forever rightâ€¦ well I
needed to ask you, but when I do leave, would you like to go with
me?"<p>

XXXXXX

Location: UCAF Base

Time: 10:44 AM

At the base marines got to work doing their usual things, grabbing
breakfast and getting into shape and the usual drills, search teams
went out and search teams came back. And the one single commander of
the whole thing was busy in his command shack with some of the sensor
net grids from the tech marines.

Inside the cramped compartments of the UCAF operations dome a single
marine worked furiously at his console trying to search for possible
communications links to friendly space, or the location of fellow
marines who might be stranded or lost. He worked and worked, usually
for hours until his back hurt.

It was about 3 hours into his morning shift when he noticed something
odd.

>"Running synchronised time relevance to point L1 and L9, begin
search for residual EM emissions and signals, particle dispersion and
immersion."<p>

It took the computers of the shack to begin picking away at
background radiation and cosmic dust particles, it revealed nothing,
at least until it hit L7. A short spike on the readouts made the
officer recheck the signals.

>"That can't be right."<p>

The scans brought out ever more particle dispersions across the
region between L7-9 and soon he hit the conclusion, he rushed back to
his command terminal and began typing out search patterns for
residual subspace emissions, which was usually everywhere, but he had
to be sure.

>"Subspace emissions at spike 0.13, confirmation, higher than average
dispersionâ€¦ possible ruptures."<p>

The sensor officer suddenly realised the gravity of the situation. He
pushed off to his secondary console and smacked a striped yellow and
black switch.

>"Contact alert, repeat contact alert, confirmed target range of
possible vessels within local system range, all personnel report to
combat posts."<p>

XXXXXX

Zaro headed in the right direction, his squad had reached the edge of the forests near their allies location. It was another day's trek to the camp and then he could alert the UCAF of the impending dangers that were coming. Sadly that wasn't the case when the sudden rumbling began to shake the earth around him.

"By the gods!" He ducked under cover of a sturdy boulder and his warriors followed him. They braced as a corvette came soaring over their heads.

"Damn it all. Vesdarea has found us first." He swore at this predicament. Things had just gotten much worse.

XXXXXX

Location: Unknown

Time: Unknown

From the depths of space a large vessel almost the equivalent size of a UCAF Destroyer appeared, however this vessel's design and creation was not of the UCAF, the markings of numbers were CVF-88 Spirit of Fire. On the bridge of the old aging carrier a lone AI stood and watched as the system came into view, she had hoped to find a resting place for the ship should it be unable to reach human space.

This was about as far as she could have gotten the ship to, it wouldn't last the journey any longer out in space, mainly due to the lack of resources, time and energy. The ship wasn't able to make it to light speed and the closest to human space she could think about wasn't anywhere on her computers, the ship was lost and so was she.

This last ditch attempt would hopefully save the lives of the remaining crew and hopefully someone would find their trail. But as she reached the system she noticed something, a spark, no a transponder signal. But that was impossible, they had been lost for so long and there was now a signal?

She investigated the faint signal, it was coming from the world she was headed to, localized it was emitting an emergency beacon, but also a human signal at a steady pace, she couldn't get the ID of the individual but it was transmitting which mean that it was enough for her. She began the wake up procedures starting with the captain, he needed to see this, if this was right then they had found their way back.

XXXXX

AN: Sorry people I did cut this one a little short due to some issues I have had to deal with in the past weeks, I have been sick and had to deal with a lot of problems here at home, especially with family, don't ask it isn't good.

I did rush this one a little bit, I've been trying not to go too far into the rush so I did slow it down a little bit more. I was aiming for another peaceful chapter to come, but it seems only more introductions and a further development into plot would have to do, and also I felt like I was keeping off the action which did sort of kill it for some people, I don't know what to say.

But yes, the covenant loyalists have arrived and the fireworks are about to really start.

As a heads up I have a new idea coming out soon enough, it will be a new fiction withâ€¦

Nyx and Lil-pip, that's right, Fallout Equestria meets Past sins, vice versa, which has been floating around for a very long time.

I have also a Starswirl the chronicles of Tempest Accord, which will be going into the Starswirl meets every other people's fanfics, or something along the lines.

I do need to get some idea of what people want so I just want your opinion on the ideas, do they sound worthwhile?

And also I am still up for OCs to add to the fic and future stories! Please submit in comments or PM me!

8. Chapter 8

CH8

The Corona of Dawn

XXXXXX

Location: Unknown- UNSC Spirit of Fire

Time: Unknown

James Cutter the captain of the UNSC CVF-88 Spirit of Fire woke to the smell of cool air, the low thrumming noise of the cryogenic pods running as it powered itself down. He breathed a slowly and then opened his eyes, his vision was slightly distorted from the prolonged cryogenic induced sleep and numbing cold. The vision impairment passed shortly and he was on his feet in moments, stepping out of the cryo-tube he felt his body sag slightly like a bag of sand; he wasn't in the best of shapes considering how long it must have been since the crew was placed into cryo-stasis.

He looked about, he could see that cryo-bay 1 was still full to its capacity and that meant that the ship hadn't reached port or rescue, but whatever it was, was enough for Serina to call him up to the bridge. He made it to the cryo-bay intercom and was greeted by a shimmer of light. The Spirit's AI appeared in a swirl of light and seemed almost joyful to see him here.

"Captain, it's been a long time." Serina greeted.

"It must have, what's the situation?" He asked.

"Nothing I can handle at the moment, there's been an encrypted transmissions from a transponder in a local system I had entered in hopes to land the Spirit for a temporary stop to get you out for a critical decision. But it seems that's no longer the case, when I entered into the local range of the inhabitable world in this system I discovered that there was human transmissions." She said rather

calmly.

"Transmissions?" He repeated in confusion.

"Yes and no, more specifically transponder vitals being sent out along with basic SOS for what seem like a civilian or non-affiliated human group currently on the world. The signals are hard to discern as they are scattered due to what seems like slip-space emissions, I can't penetrate this soup myself which is why I woke you captain, a decision needs to be made. I wouldn't know whether or not to take the Spirit in any further, for all we know it might be a trap set by the covenant, but these algorithms don't seem to be covenant in any nature. So I fell back upon basic chain of command." She explained.

Cutter knew she had made the right choice, there really wasn't else much to do when faced with the prospect of potential danger that was possibly around them, the covenant had wiped out vessels with false transmissions before, this might be no better. The only one thing that confused him was.

>"Serina I doubt that it might be covenant, if it was they wouldn't waste time with us, they should have noticed by now that we're crippled. If not then we might be in luck, but I think we have the time to check this one out."<p>

"Should I ready all hands within the next few hours?" She asked.

Cutter nodded and replied.

>"Do it."<p>

"Very well all hands prepare for unequivocal danger and possible death; we're finally back in business." She smiled.

XXXXXX

Location: Canterlot

Time: 2:11 PM

After a very arduous song number by Pinkie Pie and a party of some awkward proportions inside a hospital room, the day went rather smoothly with them all having cake. Sometime after their private party inside the hospital room ended, Celestia and Luna went over somewhere to talk privately about what to do about Miguel and his current situation.

For the mane 6 they were left with a rather intriguing situation.

>"Woo, a real life alien! this is so awesome!" Rainbow said as she jumped into Miguel's face.<p>

The helldiver moved back by about a millimetre and said.

>"Yes, this is interesting for sure, but I do mind my personal-."<p>

"What's it like living amongst the stars? Are there cool places to see, what about ships? How fast can they go through space? Oh wait-." Applejack kindly pulled the excited Pegasus back for a moment and then introduced herself.

"Apologies to Rainbow, she read Daring Do and the Crystal Skull and watched the movie about a while back, aliens and all adventuring, you ain't like those things in movies are ya?" She asked.

"Probably not, especially if there's probing involved, and I don't recall anywhere in my people's doctrine about abducting and probing female beings off of other worlds, that or cocktail parties." He then realised what he said and was about to correct that odd statement when Pinkie burst forwards and hit the camera in order to get close to Miguel's face and say.

"Wait do you have parties up there in space?" She asked with a smile that could probably kill a man.

"Yesâ€|?" He replied cautiously.

The pink pony started to shake around with so much force that she bounded around the room until she shot through the ceiling and launched into the air. Miguel looked back at them all and asked.

>"Is she always like that?"<p>

"Eyup." They replied.

An extravagant explosion of pink lights showered all of the hospital above and a single spark of light happily danced about before going back down. Pinkie landed on Miguel's bed without bothering to use the same hole she made through the ceiling and brought it down on Miguel. The marine was dusting off himself as the pink ball of energy smiled and said.

>"You gotta take me! PLEASEâ€| Parties galore, all over the galaxy in small and wide, sarsaparilla, snacks, and all that can be held and admired in space!" She said reverently about parties across the known galaxy, she practically drooled over Miguel with some sort of look that made him think she was probablyâ€|<p>

"Moving along from that subject, I think me and Mr Miguel would love to spend some time on cultural exchanges, and tastes in designer outfits, he does fit the role of rough and rugged, but also I'd love to learn about new clothing out there in the reaches of space, it would be so good to know what we could be waiting for the pony that everypony... no every being should know!" She sighed in a dreamy state.

"Okay I think that's good and all Rarity, but I'd like to learn more about farming out there in space, and if they've got anything new that might get their attention. Woo wee, starting a new farm out there on a new world with so much land and the apple family clan to help, we'd start a new kind of craze on them outer world markets." Applejack dreamed.

Miguel already had an idea of what the ponies wanted. "Are you all using this meeting with me to help you learn how to get off of your own world so you can go and integrate into the alliance systems?" He asked.

The ponies snapped out of their dreams and Pinkie replied.

>"Maybe."<p>

"Of course I wouldn't do that without your expressed permission."
Rarity said with a smile.

"Possibly." AJ replied.

"Yeah." Rainbow replied with the biggest grin on her face.

Fluttershy hadn't managed to say anything, but then again, she was intrigued about Miguel from a distance, he wasn't like any other being she had ever met, but she was shy about introducing herself. Meanwhile Twilight put her foot into the conversation by asking.

>"Miguel, I wanted to ask you before, but what is this?"<p>

Twilight pulled out a small silver card with glowing lines and strange markings; to Miguel he knew what it was immediately and replied.

>"That would be something very important of mine, and please if you could, return it to me."<p>

Twilight eyed him for a moment, he was completely focused on the card, she didn't know what would happen if he had it back, but she didn't want to be rude. She handed it to him carefully, Miguel took it into his palm and smoothed his fingers over the outline of the card, the familiar shape and size, and it was his very core...

He took the card and placed it back into his neural port at the base of his skull, it was a cool feeling of water washing through his body, the cool passed his mind and soon he opened his eyes feeling so much different. Twilight carefully looked at the change in Miguel, she could see something in his eyes, a strange glow, so powerful and yet so cold.

"Are you okay?" Twilight asked.

"Never better." Miguel replied with his now glimmering eyes.

As Twilight looked into the eyes of Miguel the doors opened to the room, Celestia and Luna came in with dark looks and Miguel knew something was wrong.

>"What's happened?"<p>

The others in the room felt the change in mood; they knew something was wrong if the princesses were concerned.

>"There have been reports of a situation occurring developing near the town of Haysting near the forests of Acacia."<p>

"And?" Twilight asked.

"The town was attacked only hours ago, reports from members of the local guards and messages from the unicorns present in the town have alerted us that an unknown force of beings have begun an assault into their homes." Celestia said in pain.

Luna finished with.

>"The town has lost contact with the rest of Equestria, at this moment guards across Equestria are being assigned to the nearby regions; it seems that we have invaders."<p>

"Do you know what they look like?" Miguel asked.

"Not entirely, however nearby villages have reported from their own positions state that the large objects seem oblique in shape and volume, they are tinted in strange hues." Luna replied.

"Covenant." Miguel hissed.

XXXXXX

Location: UCAF Alpha Base

Time: 3:20 PM

Marines scattered into foxholes as plasma fire strafed their position with intensity, the marines retaliated with 40mm grenades and a hail of fire. The waves of grunts nearby in a ditch were dropped or shredded by the gunfire, but they were soon replaced by jackals and their cousin race of skirmishers and raiders.

The light foot beings rushed with incredible and nimble speeds towards the entrenched positions of the UCAF marines. The troops didn't give the jackals a damn inch of ground, they fired with ruthless abandon, and they dropped many of the runners before their fellows began to jump into the marine's trenches.

Raiders, much like skirmishers had a record for carrying close combat gear and weapons, they had plasma hooks that could drag into the flesh of living beings and rip them open, and they also had stun gauntlets and distortion armour, a much deadlier class of combat class of jackal in existence. These specialist classes of jackals were true problems for marines.

A raider threw a plasma hook into one marine in his trench and pulled him to the ground, the hook didn't get into his flesh, but it got his combat webbing, the marine was dragged across the field for a moment before a nearby sniper blew the brains out of the raider. The marine got back to his feet and rushed back into his foxhole.

In another trench a helldiver by the name of Jace was fighting for his life, he had two jackals to deal with, he grabbed one as it attempted to rush him and tossed it into the other on the other side of his hole. He drew out a pistol, but the jackal tossed a plasma dagger and knocked out the marine's pistol, Jace didn't waste time as he decided to beat the sense into the jackals instead.

The jackals obliged by double teaming the marine, one tossed a left hook and missed, Jace rammed his fist into its bony stomach and dropped it before he kicked the other in the gut and then went back around snapped the first's neck in sharp twist. The second jackal recovered fast and rushed Jace, it bit into his neck and tore into his combat skin, he reached behind him and grabbed the alien around its neck, he used his weight and flipped the alien onto the ground, he smashed the skull of the alien with his heavy iridium shock boots and flattened its face into a bloody puddle.

Jace turned back to the main covenant force that was continuing its attack on their position, Jace removed two new mags of ammo and then slapped on into place in his AR-75 MD and began ripping holes into

the covenant troops; his carbine blew chunks out from the body of elites and grunts alike in the nearby tree line.

He was rewarded with concentrated fire on his position as the grunts and elites began to prioritizing targets. As Jace stuck himself out he noticed the hissing of a plasma launcher and immediately ran as his foxhole was blown into oblivion. Dirt rained down around him as the explosion settled. He took cover in a nearby stack of crates where 3 marines were busy directing their falcons on the covenant lines.

"Sir, what's the situation?" Jace asked the highest ranking soldier alive.

A young major in command of the UCAF at the moment was burrowed in a strategic shithole, the covenant was closing the gap around them and he had little to work with.

>"Hell, we're about as fucked as you can imagine."<p>

"That's nice to know." Jace replied.

"Is there any idea where we might be able to fall back to?" One marine asked.

"That's 'if' things get any worse, we fall back to the west barracks and hold out there and then we set off our last remaining M9 Tactical Corona class nukes, at least we'll take these sons of bitches with us." He said as he fired his M5 pistol and blew apart a nearby grunt.

"Good to hear." Jace replied as he fired again.

It was then that they noticed something change, the sounds of high pitched whining.

>"That can't be can it?" The major said in shock.<p>

The tree line blew open to the right hand side of their position, from the south of the base a massive figure of hulking metal and armour appeared. It was even bigger than their UCAF Hard suit-Exo-skeleton armour. This thing was about 9 meters in height and had more guns on it than a whole squad and the firepower of a UCAF marine shock trooper platoon.

The massive armoured suit opened up fire in moments, its 30mm chain guns tore a horrendous line of football sized holes across the length of the base. The covenant shredded were splattered in bloody chunks, one elite had its head completely blown to pieces, the head vanished into a fine purple mist as it was struck by the 30mm round.

The covenant immediately began to fire on the armoured suit, they had lost interest in fighting the UCAF, and they had more to fear from the massive walking gun platform. Their efforts however were in vain as the suit trotted onwards without a care of how much that the covenant was throwing at it.

It didn't take a genius to know that one UCAF heavy suit would be bad news for any infantry, the elite majors all knew, but their commander would have their heads if they failed him, and so they threw themselves at the suit. Three majors made their suicide rushes at the suit, all three closed the distance.

The first to reach it leapt at the head, but the suit smacked it from the air and spilt the elite open in mid-flight and splattered it across the earth. The next grabbed his blades and began to hack at the armour, but the blades made little impact on the suit's shields or energised armour, the suit grabbed the elite and began to crush the elite, the major struggled but soon gave out as it popped into a bloody mess before the suit turned its attention to the last elite.

The elite tried to hit one of the joints of the suit but it was too shielded, the suit grabbed the last major and then tore the elite in half and lathered its viscera across the ground before tossing the corpse aside to return to the fight.

The marines watched with amazement of the massive armoured behemoth ripping its way through the covenant troops. It had a lot of strength compared to that of the UCAF hard-suit teams. The suit continued on its rampage against the covenant troops. No one noticed the strange group of beings in the nearby bush observing the situation unfold in horror and amazement.

The armoured titan continued its slaughter without halt, the covenant forces soon retreated from sight as the massive suit mopped up the remaining stragglers in short order.

XXXXX

Location: Acacia Forests

Time: 3:25 PM

Gilda and her team were stranded in Equestrian territory without support, but it seems that they had located the reasons for the massive armoured machine's direction, it was fighting strange array of beings that she had never seen. The fight was brutal, far more intense than just a swing or a shot of a rifle, it was a cascade of fire and death, weapons that seemed to vaporise flesh or turn body pieces of raw mince.

Gilda stayed in the tree line far enough to avoid being struck by the fire display of the strange beings, but still she was terrified of what might happen. These things seemed capable of intense combat she had never seen in such fashion. There were beings using what looked like energy weapons, but those were impossible, at least in Equestria and Griffon territories and for good reason, they didn't know how to make energy weapons.

All of it was supposed to be sci-fi and fictionâ€¦ but then again, she might as well accept that these beings weren't from the planet so that would explain it.

XXXXX

Location: Evergreen District

Time: 12:30 PM

Whitetail worked on getting his gear packed for the trip to the UCAF location in the north of the town, it was going to be a long trek,

but he needed to get back to the UCAF. He got all that he needed into the storage packs he had, he suited up in full camouflage. He felt that everything that happened from yesterday was probably his own fault; he didn't want to make it any harder for Skyline.

Sky entered into his room, her bags packed for the trip, she smiled as she appeared and said.

>"So you packed now?"<p>

"Yes, we better get going, the UCAF commander I have would probably have my badge by the end of this, but if you wish to go, I won't stop you." He replied.

"Don't worry, I've been here so long, this is a one in a million chance in anyone's lifetime, if I don't take it now, I might never see you or the stars." She told him warmly.

"Who will take care of your library when you've left?" He asked.

"I've got a few friends in Hoofington who's been aiming to buy the shop from me for a while; I've sent a letter with a contract scroll on my home for when I've left." She replied.

James understood and then they both headed down the stairs to the main level and then exited the library from the front doors. The young mare had agreed to go with him to the UCAF, even if it was going to be a hard choice it was a choice she had made, and James knew that she wanted to go along, she had told him her reasons, and he found them worth having her along.

The UCAF was going to have his badge for future recon missions and post him with her in the colonies for this, which meant an early retirement, but he didn't mind. He was bound to be retired in the next 5 years anyway. He might take an early leave from the UCAF. He smiled at the thought; the others of his platoon would be laughing and probably cheering him on, if only they had lived to see this day.

The sombre memory passed as the two exited into the streets and through the bustling crowds, ponies across watched them with excitement and waved to them, Skyline was leaving the life she had here for the love of her interests and for James. This was both something sad and reassuring for her, to be able to leave everything behind her and find something more, and to be with someone she cared about.

They were about to exit the town when they were greeted by the sight of Trixie and her caravan being moved along.

>"I've had enough of this up stuck backwater; you can all go kiss my Magnificent Flank for all I care. I'm off to the next town."<p>

Everyone cheered for her departure. They didn't notice James or Sky going out, which was sort of how they liked it. The blue mare huffed at the crowds and then began her engine to her caravan truck and headed towards the town of Haystings, she'd have a better chance of starting with new ponies.

James and Sky doubted that she'd get very far. They were about a few

minutes from the town when James paused.

>"Do you hear that?"<p>

"What?" Sky asked.

James pulled Sky into the bush and waited for the noise to intensify, the recon helldiver scanned the skies for a moment before he knew what it was. A large vessel in oblique proportions roared overhead, its engines sent everything flying around from the wake it was creating. The vessel was over a kilometre long and seemed to be heading north.

"Damn it all." James said.

Sky hadn't seen anything like it.

>"What was that?"<p>

"A very bad thing, and if I'm right we don't have much time, come on I'll give you a lift." He picked up Sky onto his back and then began to rush forwards to the direction of the UCAF base, he just hoped that he got there before the marine's had to withdraw or worse.

XXXXX

Location: Spirit of Fire

Time: Unknown

Captain Cutter hadn't felt this alive in a while, being able to command his forces again, he knew that the troops were tired and he could tell that they were rearing to get going, but more so with getting home. But if they had the chance to get to a local population to help, they might have slip-space capable transports or equipment that they needed.

Cutter had only gotten Red team out with most of the ground troops when Serina alerted him.

>"Sir, I've sensor reports of covenant activity, lots of covenant activity."<p>

"When did this happen?" He asked.

"About 30 minutes ago, it seems that the ship involved has a sort of jamming capability, it blinded my sensor sweeps earlier, it only dropped them to begin an attack on the colony below." She reported grimly.

"Damn, get Red team onto the HEVs and I want the ODS'Ts in the barrel within the next 10 minutes, we don't have much to spare for those colonists, but we'll stall for time. How long until the technical armoured division is ready?" He asked.

"At least another half an hour, they need to get their scorpions from their bays and into the hangar, which I might add is a little cramped at the moment, but they're trying to get there." She replied.

"Very well." He looked out of the bridge display of the world below, it looked like a gem out here, a corona of warm energy slipping over each polar in such brilliance. This world seemed so peaceful, but the

covenant was here, soon enough it was either going to be burnt to the ground or it was going to be saved.

The doors to the bridge opened up and Cutter turned his attention to the suited Dr Anders.

>"Anders I thought I mentioned that you weren't supposed to be going for the operations on the ground?"<p>

"You did, but I know that the marines and the flight teams are in no shape to begin full deployment, I want to volunteer to go with Red team and the Lt." She said adamantly.

"You do realise that you as our only expert in covenant technology and forerunner would be placed in direct danger?" He asked.

"I know sir, but with all due respect I'd like to go and try to do what I can." Anders replied.

Serina appeared and made a suggestion.

>"Then how about we send her along after Red team clears the ground? The pelicans will be operational once we secure the main LZ, it should be safer with them rather than going in by HEV."<p>

Cutter knew a good suggestion and Serina was trying to make it easier.

>"Anders, you have my permission to go to ground only after Red team has secured the main LZ, but once things get well out of hand you're back here, understood?" He asked.<p>

"Yes sir." Anders replied.

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In the lower levels of the ship marines bustled about getting into pods, ODST, Orbital Drop Shock Troopers gathered inside their pods to get going, the ground forces of the covenant were about to get a rude wake up call. Members were about ready when they noticed the large armoured figures on approach, the members of Red team arrived in their 7ft MKVI armour.

ODSTs quietly buckled up and watched as the Spartan IIs jumped into the pods next to theirs.

>"So what's the occasion gunny?" A marine down the aisle asked.<p>

"About as bad as it could get, we've got possible friendlies under attack by covenant forces, possibly a scouting vessel, we've got orders to land and secure an LZ for the Spirit to deploy the pelicans, and then we dig in and visit the locals." The gunnery sergeant replied.

"What about hostiles, what're we supposed to be facing?" A corporal asked.

"All sorts of shit marine, from what the sensors told the captain, he doesn't know, which is why we're going in to find out." The sergeant replied.

"Good to know that he's got so much confidence in us." A marine joked.

"Okay shutting down in 30, we're going in!" The officer yelled.

The pods sealed and they buckled up.

>"Hell jumpers where do we go?"<p>

"Feet first into HELL!" They chanted.

"Oorah!" The following chant echoed.

The pods released the marines from the ship and they descended to the surface of the world below, Red team silently coordinated their efforts on where to look for once they landed. The drop pods reached the ground in minutes their velocity slowing as their chutes deployed. In the nearby regions of Acacia multiple streaks of light hit the ground in earth shaking explosions.

In the landing zone of Red team, the 3 Spartans exited their pods, scanning their surroundings before moving away from their pods with their weapons, meanwhile the ODSs followed up behind the super soldiers to the LZ for their support. The location in which they were looking was about north east from their drop zone, the covenant were concentrated in what seemed like a battle.

Red team could see the smoke from a mile away, the dark billowing clouds of ash and smoke drifted through the air like an angry storm. The UNSC forces closed the distance to the combat theatre.

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Location: Acacia Forests

Time: 3:45 PM

Zaro and his fellow brothers reached their location thankfully in time to aid in the battle, they signalled the UCAF with their IFF signals, the marines were pinned about 40 yards from their own position. Zaro contacted them through his com link.

>"Humans we have arrived, do you require assistance?"<p>

"Thank fuck that you actually made it; we were thinking that you got screwed by the slip-space jump, where've you been?" The commander of the troops asked over his com.

"Busy human, how have you fared?" He asked

"About as good as a kite in a storm, we've got about 30 loyalists still remaining, they may not be willing to talk to you though." The commander told Zaro.

"Do not concern yourselves with our foolish brothers, we'll deal with them, you remain in cover until we remove them." Zaro told the marines.

The green light on the HUD of Zaro highlighted the positions of his loyalist's brethren; he motioned for his brothers to follow him. The spec ops rangers activated their stealth fields to conceal them from visible sight as they closed the distance to the loyalist's positions. They took to the air and then jumped the initial distance

and then scattered in a hexagonal pattern to surround their brothers.

Zaro took to one tree above their position; he could see 1 ultra-zealot, 2 zealots and 2 regulars and the others being a mix of grunts and jackals, they were haggard and exhausted from the battle, but it seemed that the ultra, planned to send them back into the field. Zaro marked the ultra as his target and told the others to focus on the others.

Zaro revealed himself.

>"Brother's halt your hostilities! You are warriors of Sangheilios not puppets for the lies of your deluded madman, he is of no honour or glory, merely his own ego, do not listen to his lies and desist from this foolish battle!"<p>

"Lies of the heretic! Kill him!" The ultra-zealot yelled.

Zaro drew his plasma lance and jumped through the air, meanwhile his snipers picked the zealots off from behind, the remaining regular elites and grunts, jackals watched in confusion. Zaro brought his lance to bear upon the ultra-zealot his lance narrowly missing the head of the zealot; the ultra-zealot brought his shield to bear and deflected the lance grazing his shoulder.

Zaro jumped back as the ultra-zealot sliced the air with plasma talons, he landed in a backflip and crouched as the zealot prepared to lunge at him. They paused a moment before Zaro rushed forwards with his lance, the zealot complied with the challenge and brought his talons to bear on the spec ops ranger commander, the talons missed as Zaro ducked and elbowed the zealot in the gut. He smacked his head upwards and butted the zealot in the face.

Zaro was going to throw a deathblow but the zealot rolled backwards and fired 2 plasma daggers from his wrists. Zaro only managed to bring his lance to deflect the attack, one embedded into his thigh; he gritted in pain but shrugged it and continued his attack. He lunged forwards in an arc strike to lance the zealot through his torso; he only shredded his left ribcage and rolled out of the way.

The zealot sputtered blood from his mouth but didn't seem to falter yet. Zaro took to another crouched position and prepared for the counter attack. The zealot rushed onwards with talons in a downward strike, the lance blocked the blows and Zaro launched a kick into the gut of the zealot and tossed him over his head before bringing his lance to shoulder height and then ramming it forwards in a spearing motion. The zealot only saw the end of the tip before he felt the plasma lance went through his neck.

The zealot stood for a moment before his head fell off. Zaro stepped back from the remains of his deluded comrade and looked towards the remaining loyalists. The troops didn't know what to do, they looked confused as well as fearful, and they were in situation they were unsure of what to do.

>"Join us brothers, fight against the oppression of the prophets, and help us fight for our people's future!"<p>

The regular that was now in command motioned for his fellows to stand down.

>"He speaks honourably! We have our obligations, not to the prophets, our people need us more."<p>

"He is but a heretic is he not? To oppose the voice of the prophets is a-."

"Lie? We have been lied to before, the rumours of the humans as the forerunners? The blessed ones have never lied to us, but the prophets have, we must desist." The regular stated.

The grunts lowered their weapons many in relief because they had not need to die today. Zaro was glad that he still could see the good in those who remained.

>"We must rally with the humans soon; they shall be waiting for us." Zaro commanded.<p>

The once loyalists fell into line and followed Zaro and his brothers to the UCAF marines. The commander of the UCAF troops acknowledged that the covenant loyalists had rallied behind the spec ops commander, they were glad that they didn't need to waste any more time and ammo than they had.

As Zaro reached the UCAF marines they were greeted by helldivers and the commanders.

>"Good to see you made it Zaro." Jace said with a handshake.<p>

"Likewise Titus of Everfall." He replied.

"That name isn't necessarily valid anymore you known that right?" Jace asked.

"It sounds better." Zaro joked.

"Good to see that your humour hasn't dulled." Jace jostled.

The major in command of the troops brought up another matter.

>"Zaro you were trying to reach us about the loyalists?"<p>

"Yes, however that seems moot now considering that they have arrived." He motioned to the smoke billowing around them.

"True that, our base was hit hard, we need to regroup and fall out of hereâ€|" The sounds of crashing followed as the massive mechanised suit of armour returned and stopped.

"Looks like Joseph returned." Jace commented on the helldiver armour.

"Thank fuck for that." Another helldiver commented.

As they caught up the nearby bushes opened up to the sounds of movement, the marines took notice when three massive figures burst forwards from the trees with assault rifles and what looked like a platoon of shock troopers. The armoured figures burst forwards at Zaro at full speed, the spec ops commander drew his lance and the first one drew a shotgun.

"Demon!" The former loyalist elite panicked.

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That's for all I can do for now, I know that this one was a little bit rushed, but I did owe you guys a catch up chapter for staying quiet for so long.

Well also I have been having trouble with some ideas on new stories; I think I might stick with the Anthromorphic stories, also because there aren't many people willing to do anthro, so I might do that as a speciality with my fics on fimfiction.

Any OCs anyone willing to donate?

9. Chapter 9

Chapter 9

Daylight Burning

XXXXXX

Location: Acacia Forests

Time: 3:45 PM

The armoured super human broke by at immense speeds towards Zaro with its shotgun drawn. The elite spec ops ranger commander took a combative stance and waited as the Spartan closed the distance towards him, Zaro had his own little trick with dealing with a charging opponent, the elite released a shield disk the size of his arm and brought it to bear as the Spartan reached the range of his body. As he raised the shield the first 2 blasts from the shotgun blasted into the hexagonal shield.

This temporary setback for the Spartan was soon corrected as the super human made a summersault over Zaro's barrier and landed in a crouch before bringing the shotgun to hit the elite from the flank. Zaro knew that he'd never get around blocking with the shield, so he instead got his left arm to deflect the next attack. He grabbed the shoulder butt from the Spartan and felt a few bones crack from the effort, but it was worth the pain.

The Spartan II brought the shotgun around and fired again this time getting the shield gauntlet once more, Zaro sacrificed his hand, but then again. "Give my enemy one arm, but arm the other." He followed his teachings very well, the shotgun shells met the wall of energy at point blank, the shields held out as Zaro rolled back.

For the others in the midst of the brawl between the spec ops commander and the Spartan, they had barely any time to react exception being the helldivers who were keeping their distance from the fight. Zaro had landed in a crouch and was now facing the Spartan in front of him, but sadly he knew that he wasn't going to make it out of this one. Two Spartans were barely 8 meters behind him; he was as good as dead if they fired on him from all directions.

It was then that the cock of a shotgun from behind the red marked spartan made him stop. Jace had his AA-88 at the back of the head of

the spartan, Douglas was stunned he didn't even hear Jace get behind him. The spartan began to evaluate his situation. An unknown human support an elite, and an elite who seemingly didn't attack the human that was now behind him, something wasn't adding up. But it was usually shoot first and then ask questions later. But it seemed that they were at an impass.

"You even think about moving asshole and I'll put these 8 gauge rounds through your back. That I promise you will hurt." Jace threatened.

The AA-88 was a heavily modified variant of the UCAFs AA-44, a heavy semi-auto assault shotgun that unloaded more fire into the air than that of a 50cal M144 machine-gun. The UCAF had initially saved the guns as a back up for the UCAFs specialized branches in the field, but the gun was too good to pass up even for the UCAFs helldivers. Jace had his hands on the deadly auto 8 gauge destroyer. If the spartan made so much as a flinch in the wrong direction thsoe shields were about as useful as paper.

At that moment, 2 heavy calibre explosive rounds sailed through the air and blew the earth around the elite, stopping the Spartan's advance on the elite commander. A booming voice came over the battlefield.

"Stop, or I will kick the living shit out of all of you!"

The Spartans and marines turned their attention to the massive two legged suit of armour moving towards them with two 120mm heavy anti-armour guns and 30mm mini-guns, the suit swerved its head around the sides of the field.

"Elites of the former covenant have separated themselves from the covenant. The commander of the force, Zaro has allied with us, he currently is helping us. I'd suggest you put your weapons away Spartans or I'll make you! This is not the time or the place to be fighting with the allies of the UCAF! Do I make myself clear?" The massive armoured walking tank asked.

The Spartans looked to each other and the UCAF marines who had their guns pointed at them, the helldivers had their menacing weapons drawn and so did the other marines of the UCAF with the covenant separatists. The UNSC marines on the other side put their weapons to their sides following orders from somewhere else and so did the Spartans, they drew themselves back with Zaro being assisted by Jace of the helldivers going to his aid.

As Zaro eyed the red marked Spartan who nearly nailed him with the shotgun went by, he said.

"Were it so easy?"

As the UNSC personnel went over to their side of the tree line more UNSC ODS'Ts arrived only to be halted from opening up on the covenant due to the UCAF personnel and the orders that had come from above. The UCAF forces were regrouping with surviving members of the separatists going to their aid.

As the UCAF commander in charge returned he brought with him his com operator on the line with whoever had come. As they clarified the

situation, the commander finished up.

"Okay marines hold fast, we have friendly pelicans and VTOL on approach."

The marines watched as a ship appeared not far away, and from the ship, 1 pelican gunship, 4 hornet VTOLs arrived. The pelican in its gunmetal green plating landed in the middle between the UCAF and the UNSC, the escorts peeled off into a screen formation for the protection of the arriving personnel.

A squad of marines piled out with 3 people, 1 older looking man with captain's insignia, 1 unmarked civilian, and one medical officer. The crew members stuck together and got a summary of the situation from their Spartans. The Spartan with the red sash marking on its shoulder took point and the others formed a shield around the crew members. The marines trailed back keeping their triggers warm as they eyed the UCAF personnel.

Jace, Zaro and the highest ranking member of the force currently there was Colonel Jackson of the 33rd former Cerberus Legion. The colonel was a man of integrity and honour as well as respect, for him, the war was a personal hell as much as a literal one. Jackson served the UCAF for over 25 years had had been recruited at the Callistan Academy at the age of 15; he had been here from the beginning to the end. Of course the colonel wasn't a person who was political, but when he had to garner support, he brought out the best of his ability into a debate. Jackson was once the famed colonel of the Cerberus Legionaries, 100,000 of the most ruthless killing machines in human existence and had devastated over 20 covenant fleets and wiped out tens of millions in his time, he withdrew from active service of the Cerberus Legion and took to the more precise side of the war.

He was commanding the 81st recon and assault vanguard (Code named: Raven) into the covenant lines to slow progress of the covenant, he was with Zaro for a while now, he had utmost respect for the elite in his ranks and had a lot to thank the elite for. Zaro shared similar sentiments with Jackson, and both have had a very respectful view on each other.

Jackson was only returning from his damned defence against 4 hunters, he was a little bit battered, but none worse for wear; he had seen some worse things in his life than 4 hunters. Jace held his pistol in his left holster and Zaro had his hand being tended in a bio-gel cast, it would probably heal in the coming hours, but if things didn't go well, he might have to just run.

The armoured heavy mech was sitting exactly where it needed to, and of course a lot of attention was being tossed at the machine looking over all of them, its guns alone made the marines on the other side look very nervous, one wrong smack with that thing and they were good as dead. They worked around the issue by just marking off as something they didn't need to worry about, at least for the moment.

The greying officer of the UNSC met with Jackson with a straight up salute.

"So you must be colonel Jackson, your second in command told me that

you were rather bumped up, but it seems you pulled through."

"That's about right, I don't intend to go down that easily, especially since my last operation with hunters, they are big, but not agile." He replied with a salute.

"I am captain Cutter of the UNSC CVF-88 Spirit of Fire." Cutter introduced.

"Good to meet you. I am Colonel Jackson Mclean, 81st Assault Recon Vanguard of the UCAF forces." Jackson said in a stoic military tone.

Cutter could see that Jackson was a definitely seasoned soldier, he looked as grey as he was, and he guessed that he was younger. Of course the questions of one's personal endeavours could be asked later at the moment there was an issue to overcome and Cutters science officer didn't want to be held up any longer.

"Gentlemen, if you'd please finish with the traditional analysis of one's phallus over another, I think we should be discussing the problem at hand." Anders cut in.

Cutter decided to introduce the impatient doctor.

"Colonel Jackson, this is my science officer Dr Anders, she has been on my vessel since the start of operations in the UNSC war against the covenant, she is a prime researcher in alien technology and language, she has been rather adamant about getting along with formalities."

"Yes, mostly because there are covenant in our midst." Anders added.

Cutter threw her a look, he knew that she wasn't as happy to be set free, since Forge had died on the shield world and her being taken hostage by the covenant which wasn't the best thing to have happened to her, she made it a point about learning more of the covenant and dealing with them as soon as possible. He could understand her resentment, but he wished she would keep it professional.

Zaro didn't take to lightly about being called part of the covenant, since he had disavowed the covenant in his people's name and honour, he'd never allow for anyone to mock his right of honour in such a fashion.

"Watch your tongue human, you speak insults in the midst of my people and my brother's I'd suggest you watch what you say of the warriors of Sanghellios and the Broken Legion of the Redeemers of Serebus!"

That retort made the doctor take a step back, she knew she was letting her prejudice get to her, but she couldn't drop the resentment of the covenant from her mind, she stayed her tongue and stepped away. The captain was thankful she took the moment to get back so he could get their meeting back on track.

"I see that you have allied with former members of the covenant, it's interesting that this had even happened, we always believed that they'd never break." Cutter stated.

"Well after 25 years at war with the UCAF and staggering defeats for the covenant in our regions of space, they have fallen to pieces almost, there are a few remaining strong points in the covenant forces, but they're being dealt with by our forces on equal terms. As for you this is something we never anticipated before, the UCAF hadn't been in contact with the UNSC since the very founding of the ICA and the early starting age of the Nova Stratus alliance." Jackson replied.

"When was this alliance formed?" Cutter asked.

"Well over 300 years ago, it has been a long time since the old alliance had ever been in contact with the UNSC, and mostly people believed that the UNSC was nothing more than a dead world we left behind centuries ago, at least for those who know of the old fable of the Age of Revolution" Jackson responded cryptically.

"I think we might want to touch on that subject a little later, but I think you should send a copy of the UCAF history if you can to our AI Serina when you can. At this moment in time we have a rather urgent problem,, so far you've only increased the amount of questions in this situation, and for us we don't know what's going on. And also you have, former covenant on your side, which is a shock for us, and a rather hard to overcome the sense of danger for those under my command." Cutter said.

The Spartans were easily the point of the discussion as Jackson could see, he knew that the situation was by far the most confusing thing that even the highest member of the UCAF could possibly be put through, but he was trying to get everything around his head. Jackson decided that this would have to be addressed at another time and place.

"I can understand captain I'll tell my techs to inform your AI, however these elites are under our protection, I don't know how much my word means to you, but I trust Zaro and his brothers. And I believe it to be rather more effective if we met sometime to reconvene, at the present moment my marines are stretched thin and I have half the covenant loyalists are still in the region planning on taking a chunk out of me, if you could take your ship into the cover of the forest we might be able to form a defensive perimeter until my troop can get re-organised." Jackson suggested.

Cutter thought it through and got it into his head that this wasn't the right place to have a discussion about sides that were now present in the lines of the human race and the covenant.

"Very well, I'll set the ship nearby, but I'm leaving doctor Anders and my Spartans here until we can reconvene, please enlighten the doctor about your current situation and give her the details of what has been happening."

"I'll do what I can; I'll see you around captain." Jackson gave him a curt bow.

Cutter was off onto his pelican and back to the Spirit as Anders pulled out some notepads and TAC computers, she went and asked.

"Are you actually going to let me record more about your UCAF?"

"No, I'll let Simmons do that, he's probably the clearest headed marine I have and he can probably explain to you in detail, I haven't the time at the moment so he's probably the only one who can help." The colonel replied before calling over his soldier at the rear of a Bulldog APC.

As the marines mulled about the ODSs from across seemed rather prudent to the point of showing off their weapons to the UCAF marines on the other side, the display was short lived as the massive mechanized suit came rumbling through to go to its post at the front of the ruined base and keep looking out for any covenant activity.

As things went quietly, the distance from the base a flight of what looked like birds began to appearâ€|

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Location: Canterlot

Time: 2:50 PM

Miguel was hurrying into his gear, the ponies had been careful enough to leave his helldiver armour intact for him to use again. He attached his TAC pad onto his arm and checked all his systems were right to go; he was surprised that they had gone as far as to polish the black chrome finish of the hidden daggers on his body CQB plates.

Miguel charged his reserves into a power converter and then got them all going for the hangar bay; the only thing was that Twilight was persistent in stopping him.

"Miguel look, I know that you have a sworn duty, obligation, a purpose to go after the covenant. And you want to regroup with your fellow marines to go fight, but why now?" She asked pleadingly.

Miguel stopped as he entered into the hangar, the other ponies were following him closely, Celestia and Luna were gathering soldiers to prepare to move out, the Wonderbolts were getting into gear and Rainbow was dashing back and forth between her most cherished role models. And the other friends to Twilight were being assigned with honour guards as they prepared to leave.

Applejack had gotten her hands on a 12 gauge double barrelled shotgun thanks to a local guard who had one stored away in some inconspicuous place. Fluttershy was getting her things ready to help with medical treatment if it became necessary. Rarity chatted some of her guards up about the fashion in the army. Pinkie Pie was about as active as ever, gathering clusters of cakes and what looked like cinnamon swirls and somehow managing to push them all into a suitcase, which seemed physically impossible.

"Twilight you saw what I saw didn't you?" He asked her. His look into her eyes were piercing, his deep grey eyes bore into her bright hopeful purple eyes.

She spent a moment and then replied.

"Yes, I saw what happened, all those terrible things, but at least let us help." She said steadfast.

"Look Twilight, your world is something of beauty and peace, harmony and adventure, you think I haven't seen something in you? Look at your world, how beautiful it is from the world I come from, war rages in the name of survival where others murder and slaughter in the name of gods! Religion here is a utopia as your goddesses are at peace, where we come from, there is no such harmony no such peace, nothing which even amounts to the things you have here. For the love of your own sanity don't draw yourself or your friends into the epitome of war. It isn't pleasant." He replied as he packed his things into a VTOL.

"But I still want to help, as much as anypony Miguel, why can't you see that?" She said disheartened.

Miguel paused, his mind pummelling itself as it made a very biased choice, something he didn't want to do, but she was persistent, she knew him better than anyone else, so she'd press with everything to get to him.

"Damn it all, fine." He finally caved.

Twilight brightened.

"Really?"

"Yes, but don't get in my way, the plasma fire will tear you to shreds if you do, and keep your friends at a safe distance. If there's any fighting to do, then leave it to the people who know how to fight." He added with a cautious tone.

Twilight acknowledged. At that moment princesses Luna and Celestia appeared, they had changed their dresses for something more practical, if one was so observant. Luna was wearing a light navy coloured chainmail bikini, it was rather curvy and sure enough it had magical seals and emblems that were etched unto her body, the princesses had the best magical armour in Equestria next to them were the knights that they had assigned to them.

Celestia appeared, gold clad plates covering parts of her body, her heels of gold were now plate metal boots which only went up to her thighs, arm braces of magic and what seemed like a magical spear/lance, it was a beautifully crafted weapon that seemed to garner plenty of attention. With the two ruling monarchs there came their knights, the Lunar Guards and Celestial Crusaders, both orders who served the princesses since the beginning, they had been considered honourable and very skilled, it has been very long since they had been put in actual combat however.

As the ponies finalized everything they needed to the princess addressed them all.

"Listen to me my little ponies, this is the first time any of you would ever see true war, and the first time that many had even seen combat, however do not hesitate! Protect yourselves and others around you, make sure to keep each other alive, and keep each other going. For this sake alone my sister and I shall be first to the ground, the

rest of you should let us approach this diligently only if hostilities are present you may openly engage." Her tone was clear, she wanted to reason with whoever was at the region of the battle.

Miguel wasn't so happy with this idea, many of these ponies looked more green than a whole force of newly recruited 12 year olds for the first alliance youth trials, they'd either get through them, or botch their exams and get rolled out in moments. He hoped that the UCAF marines don't do anything stupid when they try to land. The equestrians and the single helldiver piled into their vehicles and departed from Canterlot. It wouldn't be long till they reached the Acacia Forests.

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Location: Acacia Forests Outskirts

James had broke into sprint with Skyline trailing behind him. He had decided to pick her up and carry her instead, lifting a woman her size was easy, he had heavier things to carry when he was younger, so this was no challenge. But he probably guessed he shouldn't say anything about that. He carried her across the distance of Evergreen to Acacia in nothing short of an hour, which was impressive for the average pony seeing as a 1200 meter sprint was exhausting especially to be done in under 10 minutes.

James kept his pace consistent and banked where he needed to avoid obstacles, he closed the distance into Acacia in about 30 minutes, they were just about there when he had to pause. He dug his heels into the ground and left large trails in the earth as he stopped, Sky was nearly tossed clear off of his back.

"Hey what was that for?" She asked with an annoyed look.

"We're not alone out here." He replied as he searched for some cover to take them into.

He found some shrubs and jumped into it, he then proceeded to continue moving them on where the treeline ended. There he paused and then pointed out something, the silhouettes of 3 other figures nearby. Sky got off of his back and then eyed them, the strange figures soon became clear, tall humanoids with wings and armour and talons.

"Griffins? What are they doing here?" Sky said puzzled.

"Well whatever they're doing here, its the same reason why we're here." He brought up his TAC pad and scanned for the UCAF signals.

"It seems they're watching over the battle, I can sense my brothers here, the teams have sent out emergency signals to all UCAF personnel in any region. They aren't keeping quiet anymore, but the majority of the battle seems to be over." There was the sounds of a pelican drop ship landing nearby.

"What's going on over there?" Sky asked.

"I'm not sure... but." A loud roaring sound soon came over and they looked up to the east a flight of VTOL like choppers arrived.

"Isn't that the Equestrian regular military and the royal guards?" Sky said to James.

"Well if it is then, thing's might have gotten a little more complicated." James replied to Sky.

There was another noise, it was a strange sound like a rolling boulder... James and Sky twisted around as they saw a large enclosed wagon house rolling at them, a familiar blue mage with cutie mark and mane came screaming at them as he wagon rushed at them.

"Oh FLANK ME!" Sky shouted.

XXXXXX

Location: Acacia Forests

Jace and the others of the UCAF began their clean up, they had to rebuild their base for the coming battle, the covenant weren't going to wait out their attack should they press another. As they did so, Jace noticed something in the distance as they began to rebuild, he wasn't sure but he could see something that resembled a swarm of birds, as he looked more closely he could see that they weren't the same thing's.

"Unknown Contacts on approach, one UCAF transponder, IFF reads the Major!" A sensor marine announced as he rused from a tent nearby.

Marines broke from their quiet reconstruction into a cheerful stance, they hadn't heard from their helldiver commander for a while, and since they hadn't any other high ranking officer in charge except Colonel Jack. Jack hurried along to join his marines as they greeted their fellow marine back, but they soon took notice of the large flight of unknwon's keeping close to what were now VTOL heli's. The marines quickly rushed out of sight into cover and UNSC marines did so as well, always being cautious especially with unknwon's.

The flight of creatures and machines landed on the empty clearing where Captain Cutter had landed. The first to land was a large black and grey heli, it looked reminiscent to that of a Falcon gunship, but lacked the obvious heavy weaponry or armour, it just looked like metal beams welded together enough for flight alone. The first one that landed dropped off a black armoured helldiver his face plate with the 4 glaring eyes of death, that was definitely Miguel, anyone of the Helldivers could see that.

"This is Major Miguel helldiver's 81st. Do you recognise me?" He called across to his fellow marines.

Jackson stood out and then walked over with Jace and another marine.

"Welcome back helldiver. Where've you been?" He reached out a hand.

Miguel took and shook.

"Long story colonel."

It was then that the Equestrian's decided to make themselves visible, Twilight and the others disembarked from their birds and over to Miguel. It was an awkward situation for both sides. Miguel decided to bring the colonel up to speed.

"I have been in the care of the locals of the planet, these are the locals, they call themselves, Equestrians. They helped me and want to help us."

The coloel eyed the major for a bit.

"Major I know you've been injured and in their care, but what the actual fuck?"

"As I said it's a long story and I think it's prudent to get everyone on a level head if we can begin talks as soon as possible their leader doesn't want to stall for anymore time." Miguel approached with more urgency.

"Miguel if this end's up on my inquiriy to the UCAF and the ONI, I'm going to have your ass on a silver platter for the wolves." Jackson sighed to himself.

"Wait what wolves?" Pinkie asked as she popped out.

Jackson yelped in surprise at Pinkie's sudden apperance and then she halted in mid air and gasped.

"All so many new faces! I've got to get things set up for a party!" She zoomed out from the screen into some other place.

Meanwhile the more serious major and the UCAF and UNSC personnel were standing about absolutely baffled at what just happened. Now to the point.

"Did that pink alien with freaky pink hair and party ballons on her ass just speak english?" An ODST asked.

Dr Ander's and the Spartan Red team came over to see what the sudden commotion was about.

"Who are they?"

"Locals, if you'd like to put it kindly." Jackson replied.

"Oh great an underdeveloped species to add to this mess." Anders facepalmed.

Of course saying something insulting in front of someone who easily could understand you isn't a smart move, Twilight picked up on her comment and struck out.

"Hey who are you calling under developed!" The purple mare jabbed her finger at Anders.

The spartan's had their orders over dealing with alien's but it seemed that they had been put into another confusing as heck situation, alien's which looked like humans. They had been ordred to protect the doctor, but this didn't seem like their kind of fight.

Anders replied with.

"Well that's unexpected."

"Of course its unexpected, we just met!" Twilight waved her hands about.

"This is going to be like one of those situations isn't it?" Jackson sighed to himself.

"Women. Thank the forerunner's I'm staying out of this one." Jace commented.

As thing's beween Ander's and Twilight froze over, a commanding powerful and yet calm voice roared over them all.

"WHAT IS GOING ON!" Princess Luna bellowed.

Everyone shut up and took notice of the princesses. The one of white pastel skin that glimmered with her rainbow hair, and the darker skinned sister with the star like head of hair looking about in the mess of communication.

"I was about to mention that their leader's wanted to speak with us as soon as possible." Miguel managed.

It was then a loud crash from the treeline of the forest blew open, the marines and everypony looked over to the sounds of the ruckus and saw 6 figures holding onto a wagon for dear life as they uncontrollably rushed at them.

"You have got to be kidding me!" Miguel face palmed.

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Pinkie sat over a box of party supplies for the new arrivals, she loved her parties and she also loved this story.

"Hey everyone!" She waved at the audience.

"I've got a brilliant idea! It's so brilliant I couldn't have come up with it!" She announced.

The author rolled his eyes as he typed out her brilliant 'plan'.

"I came up with a ingenious idea, I plan to get some help from beyond, into the tumblers! So which ponies should I bring into the universe?"

A list magically rolls out.

Pinkie Pie Solutions

Ask The Pie Sisters

Ask Twilight Sparkle Anything

And so forth!

"If you bring to the table which multi-verse ponies should be brought

out by Pinkie into the fic, just type them out! See ya later!" Pinkie said as she hauled off with a massive bag of party supplies from the place where all party thing's come from.

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Well I've got some news for you; the news is that I've been planning a sequel for the story to take it a little further from the world of MLP into the Halo Universe with more explosions and romance comedy and chaos! We're going to integrate another universe with Pinkie Pie as the catalyst. Its Halo/MLP/Mass Effectâ€¦

That's right; I've planned to integrate another universe to add to this little ball of fun, in the aftermath of the battle of Equestria and the time that follows after, the Spirit of Fire and the UCAF prepare to leave the world when the opportunity arises for them, they take their trip to the UNSC, but while they do so another force brings a little chaos to the stage and rips out our favourite commander into this fun bag!

And yes, we now have the tumblers to add to this mix of crazy! Pinkie will bring them through the plot hole of the universe to help out in the story, so vote out in reviews or if on FIMfiction on the comment section, or in PM.

(Shotguns from halo hit practically everything at point blank lethally, so i'm running with that, and also 8 gauge shotguns are supposed to be one of the most powerful class of shotguns in existence.)

10. Chapter 10

CH10

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Unto the Broken Dawn

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(Okay this is probably going to be the hardest written chapter for me as I am going to have to drag out this one for the set up for the coming climax, which will involve some rather unexpected guest to arrive, can you guess who it is?)

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The trundle of the wagon made the marines jump out of the way as the Spartans and the helldiver's rushed to stop the oncoming vehicle with everything they had. Jace, Miguel and 2 other helldiver's formed a barrier and waited for the incoming wagon, Zaro was going to jump in, but with a broken wrist and sprained ankles he doubted he could do much aside from breaking his remaining stressed bones.

The Spartans also joined in halting the wagon and got onto either side of the helldivers and braced for the shock. The 5 individual bodies on the wagon continued rushing at them minus James who had jumped onto the back to anchor them enough to slow the impact. As the wagon slammed into the wall of humans the passengers of the wagon

were suddenly tossed into the air, the blue mare flung across where a UCAF marine was waiting.

The mage landed in his arms as he reached out to grab her, however the force of the throw plus the added weight and no power armour for the helldiver it was a rather tricky catch, especially if you have a gun in your hands. He tipped over after catching the mare. Skyline flipped off the wagon on top of Jace who hadn't been expecting to catch a face full of pony, she knocked him flat on his face.

As for the three griffons they happened to fly off and glide back down in neat group with Gilda asking. "Why the heck didn't we do that in the first place?" The others shook their heads and watched the dust settle from the wagon's trail.

Miguel pulled away immediately and noted his fellow helldiver lying on the ground with a strange blue mare on top of him. His first instinct was to ask.

>"You okay?"<p>

The blue earth pony shook her head of the dust and looked at Miguel and smiled nervously before eking out a response.

>"Y-yes, thanksâ€¦!"<p>

"Good to know, now could you please get off of Jace?" He asked pointing at the human she was currently sitting atop of.

The woman jumped off in surprise and apologised.

>"Oh dear me, I'm sorry I never knew you were there."<p>

"That's fine, I've had worse." Jace replied getting up with the help of Miguel, he dusted himself off and then recomposed himself and walked back to get his bearings.

James popped from the back of the wagon and then hurried forwards to salute Colonel Jackson and Major Miguel.

>"Miguel, well this is a certainly pleasant surprise." He said in his still passive voice.<p>

"Good to see you too you migratory bastard, I never knew you'd still be with us when the Iron Clad went down." Miguel said with some exuberant sense of judgement.

The helldiver's eyed each other for a moment until Twilight and the other Equestrians came along in wonder of what was going on.

>"Miguel, wait, is that-." Twilight appeared to ask about what happened, and didn't manage to get through her sentence as a puff of smoke appeared where Trixie had been sitting and now the wagon rumbled to life.<p>

The wagon popped out all sides and then a massive puff smoke and noise as fireworks weaved by magic and enchantments went out. "Lo and Behold the GREAT AND POWERFUL TRIXIE!" The smoke cleared as the mage was now at her homemade stage pulling off that flawless move of light once more, but at the worst time.

The Spartans cleared off and so did the helldiver's they had better things to do. One could say that the largest sweat drop rolled off the side of Trixie's head and her ego as the humans of the UCAF went

back to the main problem at hand.

>Jackson decided to summarize the whole thing.
"Okay, so could someone for the love of the Forerunners please explain to me what the hell is going on?" He shouted.

"Do you want the long version or the short version?" Miguel asked.

"Short preferably but the long one would have to do." Jackson replied.

Miguel began his explanation.

>"Sir, I have with me a number of local being's and now another local species with some random chase the rainbow of an actor on her damn stage and a lot of confusing things." Trixie in the background indignantly shouted. "HEY!"<p>

Miguel continued on with his explanation.

>"The local leadership would like to speak with you, and they are ruling monarchs of the kingdom we are currently occupying, as for 6 other's and the amount of guards, let's just say that they're here as merely reassurance from possible dangers to their leaders. Aside from that, I'd like to mention that these locals have rather interesting abilities."<p>

"And also I can break the laws of physics and randomly make appearances and talk to the audience." A pink blur suddenly said from outside the frame next to the ear of Jackson. The colonel jumped back and saw only the top half of Pinkie who then jumped back out of frame and popped out next to the other girls.

"And yes now that I can see that, I'll have to raise questions with the whole UCAF research division on what to do about that." Jackson said wide eyed at the strange anomaly of a pony who just appeared.

"If I might interjectâ€¦ I think we're missing the rather dubious point here is that we are currently in the presence of one or more races on this world that have not reached full FTL capabilities, why exactly didn't you just avoid trying to get them involved?" Anders asked Miguel.

"It's rather hard to do so when they're absolutely insistent on helping, and they did make the point that this was technically their world. I couldn't stop them from coming to help, or for that matter see to it that they speak to the colonel and whoever else might be in charge." Miguel replied to Anders question.

"Okay that's about as logical as you can make this situation. What do we do now?" Jace asked as he tried getting his head around the amount of mind-fuck he was having at this point in time.

"Well we should probably do this in order, might I suggest speaking to the high and mighty goddesses of their race first?" Miguel suggested.

"Probably the best course of action for now, Anders you may join me for this discussion at the command tent, as for the rest of you, keep those Equestrians from causing any further damage or trouble for the time being. I'll need to debrief the major as well, Miguel you'll

need to join me for this meeting with the 'princesses'. Jace just monitor the situation and see if you can get the troops packing for our move out of here, I don't need us to sit around for another covenant attack on our position." Jackson then remembered that there was also Zaro.

"Zaro, if you'd respectfully ensure that your troops are packed, just prepare your troops within the hour, and contact Lt Harter he'll be able to do some clean up on the corpses, so get him on it." Jackson finished his calm organisation of the whole mess and then reached into his pocket and pulled out a Tylium Cig.
>"I'm getting too old for this shit." He puffed a few breaths from the electric cigarette.<p>

Miguel took the Colonel over to the princesses and James went over to Skyline. The other went as where they were ordered. Jace began getting the troops into shape.

>"Okay boys get it packing; Anthony, Luke and Mike get your platoons on the move in the hour we need to square away anything we don't need. Anderson, Alcon, Jamie get your teams on those bulldogs ready to move in the next hour, I want them up and running hot when we finish packing. Squadron leaders get your birds ready and in the air ASAP, over pattern watch on the area for any remaining covenant birds in the skies and keep out a sharp eye for possible covenant tracker teams." He ordered to all UCAF personnel.<p>

Marines and pilot marched to and began a rapid change from their exhausted battle pose to a well drilled military core in moments, gunners mounting their turrets and marines packing their gear into the transports to move on a dime, the UNSC marines watched in silent amazement at the sheer efficiency of a whole division being mobilized so quickly.

As Miguel and Colonel Jackson went over to the Equestrian monarchs Twilight went over to Miguel and asked.

>"So I guess you've made up your mind?"<p>

"Probably, it doesn't sit right with me dragging your people into this war, but if you're so insistent on this the Colonel had decided to go and ask about what your military would be able to help us in." Miguel replied.

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Meanwhile James was dressing out of his heavy armoured apparel into his open metallic skin; he had to get his gear dusted off. Skyline joined him in the change room of a tent, she watched him from a nearby crate as he adjusted his equipment, or in anyone else's mind 'strip' from his heavy helldiver armour. James wasn't in the normal for good reasons, firstly never having much female contact aside from professional military women made it rather hard for a helldiver like himself ever to know of privacy outside, and also he had very minimal social interactions besides partying marines and the peace and quiet of a forest world that was his home back in the colonies.

Sky watched as he revealed his bare skin, it was a rather embarrassing sight for the young woman, but it was also rather surprising how many scars he had. Many faded battle wounds across his back from painful falls, a shoulder scar where he had been impaled through the arm, and one long scar from a direct cut from an energy

sword left its apparent mark across his torso. His figure however seemed to only be enhanced by such wounds; his pale face was still unmarred apart from a few minor faded cuts on his face.

His pale skin seemed to be illuminated brightly in the change room it was ghostly like, wisps of steam from his pale skin made her wonder what it was like to be inside a suit that would make a person sweat profusely, however she noticed that there wasn't the same smell as any local colt or stallion from a hard day's work, it was steam. The air was a little misty and she noticed that it wasn't just coming off of James; it was coming from his armour.

"Hey what's up with your armour?" She inquired as he began to pour water over his back.

"Coolant and heating syncs are all venting, they've been concealing my body temperature and hiding me from heat sensors, they also work to keep me cooled in hot environments. The suit needs time to blow off the excess moisture, I'll be using it again, and I just need time to re-equip the next set for the armour." He said as he sat on a bench and began to open a case with the markings 'IVX'.

Sky watched fascinated at the steam produced by the suit and asked.

>"Ya know, I've been kinda curious, but you don't seem to mind that I'm watching youâ€| change."<p>

"I don't normally wear clothes Sky." He corrected her.

"Right well, I mean re-equip." She amended.

"I'm used to being in people's company who don't mind this mostly because we don't have time to look and stare unless you're in the marine corps or the regular military, for everyone in the helldiver's and certain higher class branches of my military this is pretty normal." He said as he began to file through his next set of armour adjustments.

Sky seemed to blush at the thought of how the marines would change, it seemed funny and rather awkward to her, she remembered how high school went, those teens used to make fun of her rather visible choice of lingerie and she imagined how it would be with all those other people all together in a cramped room.

'Jeez, that's really not the thing I want to think about now brain! James is still in the room.' She thought to herself as she watched and closed her eyes and tried getting the image out of her head before James noticed her blushing.

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Meanwhile outside the commotion of the day was slowly subsiding as the marines continued to pack, they'd be ready to move by night and reach their next designated waypoint if given to them by the locals. One marine was busy trying to sort out the mess of the wagon which nearly ran over the commander and a few other members of the UCAF and UNSC. He had to however get a statement from the owner who happened to be a rather stubborn blue skinned woman with a horn; she kept talking to herself and referred to him in second person.

"I have not time for such pestering, why do you keep insisting that I provide any sort of statement?" She asked.

"Let's see, there was a near accident the marines of my higher command almost got hit and the princesses said to one of my CO's that the vehicle if insured, probably would require a statement and provided evidence to be given, that said, I've been in motorway patrols back where I come from and no one else happens to have that sort of experience." He said in a rather exasperated fashion.

"Fine, I'll give an email to my insurance company, but that statement will come later, right now I the Great and Powerful Trixie need my rest, and if you have finished pestering me, could you direct me to the nearest temporary accommodation?" She asked.

He face palmed and replied. "We have none, while you've been yapping I was trying to add that we finished packing up camp nearly 1 hour ago, you've been caught up busily getting your things and complaining about the statement the guys at the camp have finished getting their things together, we're to leave in the next hour after the talks." He droned at her.

"What? This is outrageous I demand a temporary accommodation until my wagon is fixed!" She finished with a huff.

The marine thought to himself.

>'Wow this girl's a bitch, but you gotta admire her determination to show off, I wonder if Ken and the other guys would mind her. Hmmâ€|'
An idea sprung in his head a very cruel idea.<p>

"Okay just to avoid going into any further discussion about this, I can give you accommodation with us, just go over to that transport over there by the cars we have, it's the large one with the white fang marked on it." He told her.

She then asked.

>"Why would I need accommodation within a vehicle?"<p>

"Well you said temporary and we don't have any other place, and also you're going with us if I do recall." He replied.

"Very well, then I shall be off!" She said and left the young corporal holding back a laugh until she was out of ear shot.

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Back in the change room Sky continued to ask questions and delve into what James knew of his life. She decided to ask a different question.

>"Umm, I kind of noticed that the guys in your alliance seem to be rather young, is there a reason for that?"<p>

James looked at her and thought of a good response that wouldn't reveal too much about what the UCAF was like, of course she'd eventually find out, but he'd soften the blow of his reality to her rather than hit her with the whole truth. He replied.

>"The UCAF have a need for good troopers so we recruit at any age we can get, this resulted in many young teens and young boys who wanted to fight to join us rather go into further specialised areas of

education, there are a few who do go into further education, however many of those are either in medicine, engineers or operators, others usually stay to fight."<p>

"Do they get discharged after their terms?" She asked.

"Rarely, only because they continue to fight, as I said many would rather continue fighting for the alliance, it's the only thing that they believe in, of course it isn't an easy fight, but still they persevere." James replied getting his armour sorted.

He pulled his suit back and this time began a rather dubious process of removing plates and bits of circuitry off of his armour and replacing them, he was methodical in his work, just like his usual cold silent means of avoiding talking too much about things with people. His social isolation was kicking in only because he was back with the marines, and it seemed that they were in a tight bind with the mysterious UNSC, he could tell that there was going to be rather arduous talks with the UCAF and them.

He removed a canister from a crate and pulled out a polished bit of armour and looked at the reflection, it showed Sky lying on the bench waiting for him to get his suit re-equipped, he knew that she was going to be following him around and asking rather simplistic questions and thoughts on the UCAF and ask what the UNSC is, but the one thing he didn't want for her was to join in on the coming talks. The UCAF and the UNSC have many deep secrets and sensitive details and with only the briefing with the higher members of the command staff to be present meant that there were a lot of things that only the Equestrian princesses were to know of.

He took his time and waited as Skyline finally began to nod off as he suited up, the 30+ additional plates took time as he liberally spent his time waiting for the young woman to fall asleep, she did eventually slumber as he finished the 2 hour long period of suiting up. He carefully made his way from the locker and to the sleeping woman, she was a troublesome girl, and yet he had a connection to her, she wanted to see the universe and he had wanted something to occupy his mind, and that was her, she gave him some sense of warmth in his heart maybe it was just him feeling more human, she was young and interesting, but that was just Sky. He could only assume she appealed to him.

He took the sleeping woman through the setting sun shaded camp, the UCAF marines had begun to finally wrap up the last of their equipment, the UNSC personnel were getting to their pelicans for the relocation, he himself would be joining the command team and the members of Equestria on the large UNSC carrier, he'd leave Sky in the safety of the UCAF 2nd platoon, they had their orders and they'd look after her.

He put her down at the armoured Bulldog transport whose operator named, Chet; was busy with the radio he was also the only person who had heavy sound buffers and sound proofing material for his vehicle. James let her sleep on the bench of the vehicle and he headed off to the command tent, he'd be going in with the command staff and then sort out what was to happen to Equestria and what these princesses needed to know of the alliance. The talk was going to take some time.

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As they gathered in the command tent, the marine commander in charge, Colonel Jackson was busy bringing up maps and charts of the surrounding area and pictures taken by his Falcon squadrons, there was also a large variety of tactical data on all covenant forces in the ranks of the various separatist movements.

The data on the UCAF and its deployments in space was also there only for the princesses to see, they'd be the only ones to know of what the UCAF knows, and a small glimpse to the members of the UNSC. There were a lot of cards to play, and the hand was in favour of the UCAF, at least for now.

Miguel waited aptly tapping his fingers on the table and Twilight eyeing everything that was in range, she seemed to love the amount of technology that the alliance had at its disposal. The other girls in the tent were also gaping at the sheer amount of tech in the room, aside from Pinkie who was rather busy poking at the screen of the author once more which was disguised as a shield guard hanging from the side of the tent.

>The good doctor was also keeping a keen eye on UCAF holotech and screens, but didn't bother to inquire about them. As for the other members of the command team, there was Jace and three other lower ranked officers in the tent.<p>

James walked in from the base with his new gear on; it wasn't much of a difference, aside from multi-sensor nodes and modules attached to his helmet. The 4 lens mask seemed to make him look like an insect of sorts. Twilight and the others seemed to eye James out of curiosity he had arrived with a mare from some place and of course the great and powerful Trixie which only made them even more intrigued about his exploits.

Celestia and Luna discussed between themselves of what the marines knew of them and what might be happening soon, especially with the Covenant now here in Equestria with an armed force ready to invade, or simply exterminate. There was a com officer who was busy getting a line to the Spirit of Fire, Captain Cutter was going over some earlier reports that Anders had sent over about their new arrivals not to mention the discussion about to take place, Cutter wanted a secure line over for what the UCAF was going to reveal.

Colonel Jackson decided to begin.

>"Okay ladies and gentlemen, as you know, we as the UCAF had arrived here earlier because of an emergency drop from our ship which had been in FTL transit to a very different region of space. Why we ended up here is purely coincidence. What we intend to do, is do our job, and that is to protect civilian lives, even if non-human primarily out of goodwill, but also because of our sentient rights act, our founders saw the necessity to build bridges with our neighbours if they should be under threat of invasion and so forth. The UCAF hasn't backed down on its reasons for this act and surely with the given situation we will withhold this duty even now. That said I'd like Princess Celestia and Luna grant us permission in aiding the people of Equestria and formally recognise the intervention of the UCAF in emergency relief and intervention act, we as soldiers of the UCAF municipally will protect and serve the state of Equestria until this crisis is averted or overcome."<p>

He pulled forward the UCAF intervention act, a single white sheet of paper with a holo signature of Jackson, and the blank spaces for Luna and Celestia. The princesses had written contracts and decrees along with legislation, but this seemed to make them slightly cautious. Luna seemed inclined, but Celestia went over the paper first.

>"Is there content within this act between your governments and military that we should know about?" Celestia asked.<p>

Jackson thought it through.

>"Not that I can possibly think of, all I know is that UCAF military is still representative of the UCAF government to a branch of authority, but only so high within it, what we do now can only be recognised by you until the UCAF government does get into contact with us. And this is formal to be given to the UCAF should we ever return to human space, or we might get into some trouble later with our government. They wanted to make a proper impression, even if it maybe a little inconvenient at times."<p>

Celestia had something telling her that everything would be fine; another side said that things might get hectic for a while, but she decided it was necessary. She signed with Luna and followed on her signature. She and Luna gave back the signed treaty. Jace put in a suggestion.

>"You might want to try a public signing for later, sure it'll raise morale up, and public opinion might ease once they know that they're under threat. But it's better than the alternative at this moment in time."<p>

They looked at him and he shrugged.

>"I know morale; I was a morale officer where I came from so it's easy for me to understand implications between military and government appeal to the public. At least what I can assume that you and your people would share in relation to ours."<p>

Luna stated clearly.

>"The ponies of Equestria have never faced conflict with its neighbours in over 1000 years, if anything this would shock them more than raise their hopes, but yes we will keep your suggestion in mind should the need arise. It might swing well for our army, they never had been tested, but they are loyal."<p>

"Good to be of help." Jace leaned back on a table.

"Okay now that's over, I'd like to begin the main topic of our problems." Jackson began, he brought up a hologram of the data.

>"The covenant loyalists, led by Zealot Master Vesdarea, this means that we'll be up to our necks in vicious killers. Vesdarea has been well known to be the best at precision assault missions, and led hundreds of raids against the UCAF front lines, at least until Zaro and Rebas rebelled and brought the Zealot Master to his knees."<p>

Zaro nodded with his second in command. Jackson continued.

>"Our situation is simple, we are equal, at least in some sense, and Captain Cutter's force holds a total force of over 9000+ personnel. With our troops we just barely match the covenant in the sense of bulk troops, and this isn't the same covenant I might add, they've adjusted their troops over time, so what we'd face is going to be worse than a bunch of lightly armed grunt packs and

jackals."<p>

"What might we be expected to face?" Cutters asked.

"I was just getting to that, the covenant zealot force we saw out there was any indication, there was one corvette, and possibly something much larger."

"What exactly do you mean by larger?" Twilight inquired.

The hologram of the corvette was replaced by the shape of what he had meant by larger, the ship which had come with the corvette.

>"A covenant assault destroyer, or more specifically a Tyrant class Destroyer, Vesdarea personal flagship, he's been using this mother of destruction to break through UCAF lines constantly. But it seems that he's gone and hidden with his vessel, at least, that's what I would do."<p>

Zaro agreed.

>"Vesdarea would never abandon his Tyrant, and this force of his troops would only continue to fight if it was him. I am certain that he must possess his ship, but after our last battle, I would suspect that it is not in the best of conditions."<p>

"If this destroyer is nearby, then why hasn't it come along to fight?" Luna asked.

"Probably because we crippled the shit out of it." Jace commented.

Jackson explained.

>"Zaro and James went aboard during our battle and set charges on the ship when we went into slip-space, we detonated the charges, but Vesdarea and his psychotic belief of vengeance ordered his remaining ships run into our vessel in transit to spare his anymore damage. His tactic worked and we got forced from slip-space, but his ship was still crippled."<p>

"And the fact that we didn't see it destroyed is another reason why we are sure he's still around, we have to make sure to confirm his death, or he's probably alive." Jace shrugged.

"Wow this fella sounds mighty tough." Applejack said concerned.

"That's because he is, Vesdarea is one of the few zealot masters that few people deal with, and since he's gone AWOL from the ranks of the loyalists, he's even more violent now." Zaro hissed.

"Okay now I need to ask, how the heck is it that you know of this Vesdarea?" Anders asked.

"We were both in command of the same ship and force of troops, a few years ago. He grew insane with his belief of the great journey that even others in his command were executed for disobedience and lack of strength or so he kept saying. He was paranoid to insanity and only I and Rebas managed to deal with him."

"Ohâ€¦| how did you manage that?" Anders asked.

"We challenged him in his command after our last attack, he glorified over slaughtering a whole colony with burning his mark upon that world, he also destroyed a marker point of the holy forerunners out of anger that he could not secure it, and planned to place blame upon his subordinates for failure in battle. We could not believe it and confronted him." Zaro seemed to tense his body.

Rebas his second in command finished up for his angered battle brother.

>"Zaro was in the front for a very long time since our first encounter, once we were assigned to Vesdarea, we couldn't believe the sheer insanity of our commanding officer and finally the time came when we all agreed to overthrow him. We challenged him and escaped, but he ordered us to be hunted. That thirst for vengeance and his own insane ego has aided in him destroying his forces ever more."<p>

"So you stand as a moral and more honourable side of your race?" Anders analysed.

"In that sense yes, honour comes in accepting one's own personal defeat as a commander and must learn, however Vesdarea hasn't learned a damn thing and has only grown further impatient with his own troops. It leaves a rather serious gap between him and his brothers, but he ignored any attempt at changing his personal opinion. We gave up after the last slaughter." He sighed.

"Okay an insane alien with a thirst for vengeance, paranoid and incompetent, that sounds like a winning edge for us." Anders stated.

"If it were that easy, Zaro would have beheaded the damned fool years ago, but no, he's managed even afterwards to stay a step further from death even when we have him cornered." James commented upon Anders.

"So if this commander and his vessel are here, why hasn't he attacked?" Luna asked.

"Probably because it's still damaged, even a week later, it's doubtful that he can get his engines to work right, not to mention most of the navigations on the ship were ripped to pieces when we were finished, so it's unlikely he'll be bringing his ship to us." James explained.

"That means we'll be looking for his ship?" Twilight asked.

"Pretty much, we don't have much other option, once we've located his shipâ€|"

"We bring the Spirit of Fire down on its head?" Cutter finished.

"No, that's actually the worst thing you could do at this point in time." Jace told the captain.

"Why?" Cutter asked.

"Because the destroyer wasn't completely disabled, and we saw your MAC gun, it's not going to be enough to bring down that destroyer." Jace told him frankly.

"What are the specifics of his vessel anyway?" Anders asked.

Jackson brought out the layout of the ship.

>"The Tyrant is one of the few ships to be modified for a zealot strike force, so it doesn't have the same design layouts compared to many covenant vessels. It's also not the same size as a normal destroyer, it's over 3.6km long and possesses over 4 main batteries, a ton of guard points and a crew of nearly 40,000 aboard, and not to mention that corvette alone carries nearly 5,000. The Tyrant also has fighter compliments and drop-ships and a single scarab, pattern 44 which is a heavy assault pattern, incredibly heavy armour, it would withstand more MAC blasts than you could produce within a day."<p>

"Sheesh these things sound pretty bad." Rainbow said observing the scale models.

"Yeah, well at least we don't need to worry about the whole enemy fighter compliment and troops, we depleted over half of his troops in our last engagement and wrecked a lot of his vessel's main guns, but even then, and just one main gun could gut the Spirit, seeing as you have no shields." Jackson told Cutter.

"And you possess shields?" Anders asked sarcastically.

"Yeah actually we do have shields, but none of them are meant for ship's our ship's been sunk and I don't think yours can be adjusted with a shield anytime soon." Jackson replied.

Anders seemed surprised, their counterpart race had shields. Cutter wanted to press things along.

>"Then how would we proceed to attacking the destroyer?"<p>

"I'd suggest we don't, at the moment. We have their corvette to deal with, and once we remove it from the picture we should focus on the destroyer and its force. At least hoping Veddarea isn't going to stand scattering his troops out to engage us, if he does then we're going to have problems." Jace explained.

"We'll this is just great, so if they attack a town or city you'll be stretched to fight them at all?" Rainbow summarised.

"That does sound like a serious flawâ€|" Rarity said.

"Don't worry too much about us; the thing is that the UNSC forces would be the ones getting into a serious problem if they have to engage." Jackson replied.

"Why would we be in trouble?" Anders asked.

"Because you're using basic combat armour and standard military gear, you don't have shields or the medical gear to keep your forces in a prolonged fight with the covenant we face, and if you did engage them, you'd suffer heavy casualties before it ends." Jackson explained.

"Much like our own situation?" Twilight asked.

"Pretty much, exception to magic." Miguel replied.

Anders huffed at the notion of magic.

>"Then are you going to provide us with your gear?" Anders asked.<p>

"Yes and noâ€| that's going to depend." Jackson said.

"Depend on what?" Anders asked.

"If we can eliminate Vesdarea soon with a precision strike with Zaro being able to take command, we might avoid a prolonged conflict, but we need to go through this stage by stage or, we'll have a really nasty fight on our hands." Jackson told her.

It was then that the com officer entered into the room.

>"Sir we have something on long range com linesâ€|"<p>

"What?" Jackson said.

The marine placed the com unit over the main speakers and had it relayed.

>"Can you patch the com through the Spirit?" Jackson asked Cutter.<p>

"Very well, please wait." Cutter went to Serina to ask for the line to be secured.

The speakers blared to life.

>"This is Recon 81, Helldiver unit, Midas, Echo emergency line 3, can anyone receive, hostile engagement at location, 344-231, town identified at Appleloosa by locals; we have hostiles engaged at location and are waiting backup. Is there anyone there? This is Helldiver Echo, Midas, we have marines on the ground and hostiles engaged, requesting any assistance!"<p>

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Location: Appleloosa

Time: 8:22PM

Echo and Midas were both small Helldiver units, they were made for fast recon and attack, but nothing like what they were facing. The town they had entered into was strange, to say the least. They had been observing it for about 4 days until they saw the covenant arrive, this patrol seemed to be on a sweep for humans, and found the town nearby.

The marines hadn't been too sure of what to do, but this seemed like the right thing, they had to engage the covenant; this town as much as it was alien did have civilians. Helldiver's tended to keep their distance, but it seemed that they didn't have much of a choice. The town had the only civilisation within reach.

They engaged on the outskirts the first patrol at least, until they called in reinforcements, then things got serious. Three drop-ships landed over a dozen more units and a wraith force, they were now pinned at the town with their marines. 2 young blood marine squads which had joined them since their separation from the ship had followed them to here. The young teenage shock troops had experience,

but they lacked the capacity to withstand this firefight with so many covenant.

The commander of Echo was Daniel Lorenkovski, a Sargent Major and one hell of a veteran.

>"Tih, get a signal out, we need any backup from wherever you can get them!" He yelled as he fired his AR-45 and blew apart an elite's face.<p>

The com officer continued to repeat the message to whoever might hear. Meanwhile the marines in the town formed a defensive perimeter to keep the covenant at bay. They weren't having too much luck though. 8 squads of covenant against the 2, not to mention the 4 wraiths bombarding the town didn't make it easy for them to fight.

The locals had gathered at the town hall and others were in their homes with arcane rifles, blasting out at oncoming covenant with ease, the only problem was that their rifles didn't seem to work on jackals or the elites very well. It distracted the covenant at least until they decided to blast away at homes.

Helldiver unit Midas was engaged on the other end of town securing a train, of sorts, they were getting passengers aboard while also assigning their 'ally' a specialised officer named Grant with his own personal squad of marines to the train. They had a priority to reach the surviving marines, which they assumed were south east of their location, from their radio burst they received.

Midas and Echo were sceptical of the transmissions, but allowed them to leave. Midas's commander was Lt Gerard Matthis. His unit was holding the other end of town, but having to handle the evacuation as quickly as possible. Daniel had to handle the heavy fighting with the elites; at least that's what he was capable of doing.

"Mack, get Joey and take sniping positions behind me and the others, cover us as we fall back!" Daniel ordered as the next wave of covenant engaged.

His squad did as it was told, the marines hustled back and set up covering positions right behind him, the fight was wearing out his men and he had to fall back, Daniel pulled them back a squad at a time to the snipers while they fended off the continued attack. Tih continued to transmit.

"Let's just hope help arrives soon, or we're going to have covenant up our asses!" One of his fellow marines commented.

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It was a shocker alright, the contact from Appleloosa had sent in an emergency communications right to them, Helldiver unit Echo and Midas were trapped there with 2 young blood units waiting for response, and the news that a covenant attack being launched so soon seemed to make Jackson cringe.

"Damn it all! I thought we had more time!" He said through his teeth.

"Sir what are your orders?" Miguel inquired.

Captain Cutter also added to the situation.

>"We have pelican teams on standby ready to deploy, but I doubt that they'd stand much of a fight, they haven't been upgraded to the extent of your own gunships."<p>

Jackson thought this through, this was a fine mess alright, there were too few marines left and those he hadn't the manpower to take on anything more than a small task force. Civilians were in risk, and his men he had over in Appleloosa were on their own. If the task force was large enough to threaten 2 helldiver units and 2 young blood forces then it was damn serious.

"No need Captain Cutter. Miguel, get on the coms with the falcons take Jace and marine units, Jericho and Otto to Appleloosa." He ordered.

"Yes sir!" He saluted.

The equestrians didn't want to be left out.

>"Wait what about us?" Rainbow Dash interjected.<p>

"What about you?" Jackson asked.

"We can fight too! No feather flying alien can just walk over us, this is our home!" Rainbow replied.

"And my cousin lives in Appleloosa!" Applejack added.

"And you do realise that you have little to no armaments that can barely drop a covenant shield let alone take an elite down? How do you expect to fight with no weapons? And the covenant in hand to hand are just as viciousâ€¦ it would end up a slaughter until you have the ability to help." He replied to them aptly.

Rainbow and Applejack were going to reply, but Twilight stopped them.

>"Girls please, the alliance know what they're doing. They're right, we don't have the ability to fight yet, and I'm sure that we will be able to sooner or later." She threw a glance at Jackson.<p>

Anders asked.

>"You're not suggesting that the alliance arm and train civilians, especially those who are not of human origin?"<p>

Jackson knew that this was going to be raised one way or another.

>"It's all semantics Dr Anders, the UCAF have a policy in its original foreign interstellar colonisation and independence act, that any world that has proven hospitable and have reached a level of understanding and proven capable of tier 4 to tier 3 are to be granted low level military training based on species and variable necessities of said species, this does not limit to human occupied worlds. And that was amended by 3 more additions; however the original was never removed and it is the very reason why Celestia and Luna signed that act. It gives us permission to do so now." Jackson recalled from his time at officer school.<p>

"You're kidding right? Why would you even have such a policy in your alliance or to that extent within your entire government?" She

asked.

"It was when we first expanded and we thought we'd might run into a friendly alien species that might want to join us from high tier 4 to early tier 3, so it left us with a bit of a hole in our foreign interstellar policies. And such it was never revisited when the war began, because we had never tested it. And such it couldn't be just removed." He shrugged.

Twilight was thankful she had retained the memories from Miguel about the alliance and its laws, the Equestrians had proven hospitable and there was an urgency to get them into active status to defend their world. The alliance could win by themselves, and surely the UNSC doesn't have the equal forces to do so either.

"That is possible but I wouldn't doubt us for being weary." Cutter defended.

"Not to be offensive Captain, but you do have the troops but not the gear, for this it would drain you of most of your troops, I'd consolidate your men with ours for the time being. We better get on the move, meanwhile, I'll have James contemplate the resources necessary to arm the Equestrian forces with alliance gear, but the training itself might have to be on the backburner until we can resolve the skirmish at Appleloosa. As for our current base of operations, would situating us at Ponyville suffice?" He asked the Equestrian princesses.

"It will have to do for now, the situation is turning ever more critical, you'll have to reveal yourselves publically, as for the ponies of Equestria, we shall have to calm our citizens down. And Luna shall prepare our military to deploy as soon as she can bring them from their posts. I'm sure Shining Armour will be there for event." Celestia stated.

"My brother's going to be coming along as well; I thought he and Cadence were out on a diplomatic trip to Neighpon?"

"They were, at least until this incident occurred, we told them they had to return earlier than expected, due to the severity of the situation." Celestia explained.

"Well at least we have a means to protect Canterlot." Twilight mumbled.

"Wait you have a brother?" Jace asked.

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(Okay now that was a chapter in storage, I will be editing this when I revisit hopefully in August or September, I don't have enough time to go fixing thing's if there are inconsistencies please identify for rectification later, aside from that I've got a lot of work and little time for everything. So please be patient!)

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Bleeding Dawn

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8:30PM

Appleloosa

Midas Squad and Echo Helldiver squads were scattered in a rough diamond formation, a total of 10 helldivers and a few scattered marine survivors from the ship with them made a total force of 30 against roughly 126 enemy units, not bad considering the helldivers, but having to face enemy armour plus air support? Well then those odds don't stack too well with the situation, but the good side was that the locals seemed to be fighting as well, even if their rifles couldn't punch a hole in grunt harnesses they'd scare the covenant troops back for a few moments.

Midas squad commander was Lt Matthis, a seasoned shock trooper and a good squad commander, he had his men covering all points of attack from the covenant, but they were still technically stretched thin. 2 men holding position in a nearby saloon had the enemy snipers and marksman covered, but the number of grunts and fodder that was being directed at them was the problem, his other 3 men couldn't drop the damned grunts fast enough.

Echo squad under the command of Sargent Major Daniel screamed out from his position.

>"Burn the fuckers!"<p>

Daniel had a Scorcher in his unit thankfully one of his less experienced marines had decided to go and loot a few extra pieces of equipment before they left the ship, thanks to his bum rush for more gear it might have just saved them having to hold the entire covenant assault at bay for a while longer.

A squad of grunts that were caught in the blast of thermite and liquid flammables screamed as their flesh began to melt, and pop, the sight would make a civilian throw up but for the UCAF this was just another day at work. The flames consumed ravenously until there was a mass of explosions, the gas breathing grunts had methane canisters to survive and with the temperatures at nearly 7500 kelvin, it was a good bet that those tanks were going to go up like fireworks.

This sight of their fellows being roasted alive sent the grunts reeling back to their lines, their commanders having to beat them over the head to make them reform their lines. However for the elites in the packs there was little they could do as well, snipers from Echo and Midas picked off the Majors before they could utter out more than a sentence. Of course the others now took cover in the nearby rocks, but they still had to go and command their troops.

Daniel could see that things were levelling out, but in another hour or so, they'd be running low on ammo, they needed a mass fabricator to get them through this fight, especially if the covenant pulled out another platoon of troops down here. Daniel watched as a squad of grunts loading a plasma launcher, unfortunately for them, the snipers picked all of them off.

"Sir!" A young blood marine yelled.

He was drawn to the marine who had an AA-M180 Missile Launcher, he pointed to a covenant drop ship, and he paused to see distinct shapes of what looked like.

>"Rangers!" He yelled.<p>

The elite ranger squad disembarked from above using their gravity packs to rapidly deploy along their left flank, the missile launcher wasn't going to be able to cut the number of hostile rangers down though. The squad dispersed engaging Midas squad. He didn't like this one bit he called over the coms.

>"Red team move to support Midas, Blue team remain in defensive formation."<p>

Red team was the other Young Blood Marine unit they were supposed to be on the other side of the town but hearing the orders they immediately rushed down to meet the covenant surprise attack where Midas was. As for Midas, Matthis had his hands full, literally. The Lt had seen the approach but never expected the attack; he would have thought they'd avoid a direct engagement.

Still the Lt had a brief fight on his hands; the first elite down went after him. He managed to raise his left gauntlet to catch the energy dagger that the elite attempted to stab him with. The blade rebounded off the energised plating briefly sparking the area around them; Mat rolled back and drew out his M6 handgun, the .50cal rounds pounded into the shields of the elite. The ranger didn't last long under the rapid fire and was struck in the face by the 3rd round which blew a chunk from its lower jaw and dropped it with a heavy thud.

Mat didn't have time to recover however, he was soon beset by another elite, this one really had a pissed off aura about it as well. The elite tackled him through the nearby building where his sniper team was busy fending off their attackers as well. Mat felt his world spin as he flew through the wooden walls of the building, he twisted and arced a landing onto a table sitting not far away.

The table splintered under his weight and also by the sheer force he was thrown at, his visor was strangely covered in apple juice and cider as it identified. He recovered fast enough to do a backflip before the elite could land another blow into his already dented armour. He landed on his feet coming face to face with the elite.

"Nice punch, now my turn!" He ran forwards and brought his gauntlets to bear on the elite.

His first strike was deftly blocked, and he then brought his knee upwards as his jetpack activated, it wasn't much of a jetpack but it was enough to double the impact of his knee. The strike broke the stance the elite had taken and stunned it long enough for Mat to grab its shoulders and then flip over it and grab it from behind. He grasped the waist of the elite and pulled hard lifting the alien through the air and landing it right on its head.

Of course that wouldn't exactly drop an elite, not even a minor would be dropped by that so easily. The ranger recovered and got to its

feet and grunted in annoyance, Mat waited for it to try that one again, the elite obliged him, the ranger boosted forwards using its gravity pack to slam into Mat. Mat anticipated his move and rolled away from the incoming half a ton of flesh and metal, the elite smashed into the wooden counter of the bar.

Splinters and glass flew in all directions, Mat got behind the recovering elite and smelt the alcoholic fumes, it was enough for him and drew his M6 and aimed as it turned around to face him, and one quick shot set alight the alcohol around the alien. The blast consumed the elite in a ball of fire; it took another shot from Mat to silence the elite.

Mat was going to head back out until one section of the ceiling above collapsed, an almighty crash resounded as the pile hit the floor. It took moments before the figure of one of Mat's team members crawled from the mess.

>"Damnâ€| 'cough' elite."<p>

Mat rushed to the side of his comrade.

>"Stan, you've taken serious damage, I count 3 broken ribs, you're left lung's been punctured and you have internal bleeding."<p>

"No shit sirâ€| I-I thought I had that bastardâ€| son o-of a bitch!" He grunted as he stabbed himself with a bio-gel injector.

"You need medical evac; you won't last long on bio-gel alone." He advised.

"I know, but don't preach to the choir, Veck is upstairs, he's got the sights on another enemy column, and they're on approach another 10 minutes outâ€|" He finally lulled into unconsciousness from the bio-gel.

The warning was punctuated by the roar of a mortar smashing the nearby wall with plasma, the enemy column was closing in and fast. He picked up a fallen rifle from a spilled weapons canister near the exit that was left from his rather abrupt entrance into the bar. He got the scope of the rifle active and began to search for the enemy column; it was exactly as Stan had said. Another covenant column was right on their asses.

"Echo, we've got hostiles closing distance on the left flank of the town, they'll be in range in another 5 minutes, do you have spare sledgehammer mortars?" He called over to Echo.

"No, we're down to our last scorcher; we've drained most of the heavy weapons." He reported.

He felt the reality of the situation closing in and around him, it wasn't until he heard something that he spun around whipping his pistol up, and he froze seeing it was an unfortunate local who had gotten stuck in the midst of this war. This local was strange, she had yellow skin and red hair, and she wore some rather light clothes, leather hat and settler like clothes. She was armed with a rifle of sort's rather heavy barrelled lever action rifle he had seen commonly amongst the locals. The local was asking him something but he couldn't understand what it was, it was then that the local called over to someone.

The next thing he knew half a dozen locals had appeared, one who seemed to lead them was a yellow skinned fellow in a long coat and Stetson hat, he had a brown tail and brown hair, he had an apple stitched on his shoulder, and the most interesting feature was that he had piercing emerald eyes. He led a band of locals with him a mix of green and blue with some tints of yellow and brown, the colours of these beings were becoming a rather serious annoyance to him.

The leader of this band seemed to motion to him and the other members of Midas team, they then began to scatter around them, it seemed the locals wanted to join the front line fight. The leader greeted him with a jovial smile and said a lot of crap that he honestly could not understand; his translator wasn't included in his armour because he was sent on precision strike missions, not long expeditions into enemy territory.

The yellow man motioned to the enemy on approach and motioned for Mat to follow. He didn't know what else to do and called over his channel.

>"Boys hold tight, I think our friends have something in store."<p>

"Goodie, a surprise from primitives, I wonder what'll be?" Mal sarcastically asked over the line.

Mat ignored the remark from his remaining assault specialist and followed the yellow male to what seemed like a large barn. The alien male strode to the large doors and opened on side up. Mat could see what was inside and he was rather shocked, it looked as if someone had stuck a launching rail onto a truck.

The yellow male said something he couldn't understand but from the way he pointed at the launcher and the back of the machine it was clear what he wanted to do, it was a makeshift catapult, and there was another surprise. The alien walked over to a large storage shelf filled with what looked like barrels and crates filled with explosives, that was if the yellow warning markers meant the same thing as they did in the UCAF.

He took this as a support tool the tech-marine they had with Echo could rig this baby up as a mortar and fire off some barrels in a rolling barrage, it might be cumbersome, but it was better than nothing. He also needed to make sure that they loaded anything that was flammable and explosive onto the damned thing as well, make a wall of fire to slow the advance of the covenant.

"Echo I've got what looks to me like a makeshift catapult; I'd like to have you bring over your tech to come and rig this baby up for a fight." He called over the coms.

"Roger, I've got Mack, he's rearing for a quick challenge, tell him where to go." Daniel replied.

"Follow my marker to the large barn in town, it's got a gear on top of it with white markings, shouldn't be hard to see." He described.

The yellow alien tapped him on the shoulder looking for a hopeful response, and he patted him back and thumbed him up, he honestly thought that would be some sort of indication that things were okay

at least for now. The yellow alien smiled and went off to check on those explosives, he only hoped that the alien understood what was going on.

Mat didn't have time to stick around he knew that Red team with their 10 man unit wasn't going to last with support on the left. He jogged back to the front as Mack headed into the barn, it was now up to the young engineer to get to work that piece of crap and get it to work. But there was still one question that didn't stop plaguing his mind.

'Where in the fuck was the support that he called in?'

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Miguel and Jace had been in the Falcons for about an hour, they weren't far away now, the distance they covered in the falcons was quite far, they managed to reach the edge of the vegetated lands in under an hour so at the rate they were travelling at it was a matter of getting there in the next 20 minutes or so Miguel hoped.

Jace was busy checking his AR-45 and getting his M5 Magnum loaded, he had a bubble shield projector and an evasion module, of course evade wasn't exactly a skill it was a trick, but still using them on walls and rubble prove to be handing in bypassing any obstacles that might get in their way.

Miguel himself had brought out a particle field emitter; the field would strengthen his shields by 120% for a limited time and then had a recharge of over 3 minutes of no shields which seemed rather dangerous, that was also why he brought along a medical field projector, it would heal any injured in range of the projector until it ran out. They were here to support and relieve until the covenant exhausted themselves or were defeated or they managed to get additional help.

Jackson was moving his entire column command to Ponyville which had a rail line directly to Appleloosa; hopefully they'd manage to get a few other units down to Appleloosa before the covenant brought up further troops, of course they might pull back, but the town would no doubt need to be evacuated faster.

Miguel watched as they closed the distance to the town, they weren't that far away, smoke was rising in the distance, it didn't billow like a firestorm but the number of explosions kind of made it obvious that the fight was still intense. Jace checked his scope of his AR and scanned for the areas needing to be relieved.

"Sir, I've got a lot of covvies trying to flank left of the town, it might be a desperate push or a determined one, but should we bring the falcons down on the area? We'd repel the covvies long enough to evac the wounded." He suggested.

"See anything like heavy armour?" Miguel asked.

"Yeah, a few bits of armour from what I can tell, no fast movers, just platform wraiths." He replied as he scanned for energy signatures.

"Well then I guess we have a target." He got onto his coms.

>"Mueller we've got hostiles on the ground, left flank of the town, can you spot those energy signatures?"<p>

"Yeah, we've been picking them up for the past hour; do you want us to clear the deck with them?" The squadron commander replied.

"Roll the bastards first and then we'll land, I'm sure our boys will love the relief from the covvies." He grinned.

"Right on, all flacons form pattern V we're going in for a strafing run, gunners mount up." He called over the coms.

They all obeyed and mounted their various weapons, HMG-75cal and other heavy weapons primed and ready, it was like staring at a wall of death, there was nothing that would last long against a wall of fire that the falcons were going to be bringing down on the covenant forces below. The roar of the falcon's engines erupted as they began a rapid descent to the town below.

The covenant busy trying to break through hadn't noticed the 4 falcons on approach, at least not immediately, the falcons got close enough to the battle that the covenant began to scatter at the sight of the light gunships. Then there was hell to pay, the falcons dropped their payload of short ranged missiles, the attached missiles were rigged at the bottom of the falcons on 7 packed racks on both sides of each falcon.

The hail of 105mm explosive HEAT missiles sent the armour packing as the wraiths amidst the slow procession to the UCAF lines began to explode in a vibrant clash of yellow, gold, red and blue and navy. The explosions at the rear of the infantry sent the grunts scattering in fear, they had just lost their armour.

But the strafe didn't end there; the gunners began to lay down a hail of tungsten and titanium, the earth exploded in a straight pattern, stitches in parallel to each other send flesh and armour flying in all directions. To see what a 75cal HEAP round could do to a grunt was messy to say the least, the sheer scale of carnage would make anyone nauseas, at least not the UCAF, the smell was bitter but the sheer sight of it all was pleasing.

The members of Echo and Midas still on the ground rejoiced for the arrival of the falcons; of course they immediately resumed as soon as they passed over the covenant troops for the second strafe. Miguel could make contact with the squads over his com.

>"Echo, Midas, we're here to relieve you, report status."<p>

"We've got wounded and are running low on ammo, locals would need some help, but other than that, we're right fucking dandy." The commander of Echo reported.

Miguel could see that the strafing had relieved some of the pressure, but there were still quite a few covenant troops out in the mix, he had a feeling the last wave was still coming. He scanned the surrounding areas for anymore covenant signatures and it soon confirmed his suspicion.

>"Echo, Midas we're going to ground cover out flight on the right side of town."<p>

Miguel turned to Jace.

>"Hey sergeant we've got incoming hostiles just west of our location, looks like a small strike force, probably loaded with hunters."<p>

Jace looked over exactly where he had marked on the squad map, he could ID about 5 gunships and what looked like a few remaining pieces of armour, the covvies were throwing in their last cards.

>"Well, all we have to do now is hold out." He replied over the roar of the engines.<p>

They made a quick pass over the remains of the town and landed it a large pen, it had seen better days that was for sure. Jace and Miguel stepped out and ducked low, their squads followed up behind them, Jace would be coordinating the marines, and Miguel had the duty of aiding the remains of Echo and Midas squads.

They passed through the town until Miguel got a call over his com.

>"Major, meet me at the large warehouse with the crossed tools, it's on the main road. We've prepared a few things in time to counter any further attacks, but I need to speak with you about another matter." The commander of Midas explained.<p>

Miguel waved off Jace and he passed into the main street where people were busy running away towards the station, he could hear the cries of the children and the woes of the equines, they did technically lose their town, but he suspected light civilian casualties, the covenant caught them all by surprise of course.

He found the warehouse which Midas's commander had described, it didn't look like much but a lot of people were milling around it, they spotted Miguel and called him over. The moment he arrived they greeted him with hopeful faces and thanks for their timid arrival. The crowd ushered him to the warehouse and soon he found what looked like a jury rigged lorry which had a type of high pressure loader which had been turned into a makeshift catapult.

If this was what Midas had planned, they'd have to be complete idiots or desperate, but he suspected that there was more to this than met the eye, he spotted a helldiver engineer, well not an engineer per se, but he was a technical weapons expert which meant heavy weapons. The marine was busy working on the machinery when his commander appeared.

"You must be Major Miguel, Lt Matthis; I've been in command of Midas since we landed here." Mat saluted to him.

He saluted in response and then asked.

>"I don't recall we ever met on the Iron Clad, or for that matter on any of our previous missions, I've heard of you but never met you."<p>

"I've heard and seen you, but true we never properly met, I was loaded on the other side of the ship. Not to mention, Colonel Jackson was in command remember?" Mat asked.

He did remember Jackson but not so much on the other helldiver team.

>"Jackson's been around with everyone for a while. Good that he's up

and about; he's running most of the command right now."<p>

"Well then I owe him debt of gratitude when we get the hell out of this alive." Mat replied arguably more or less optimistic of the whole situation.

"I've got some extra firepower from our drop, where do you need it?" Miguel inquired aptly.

"Anywhere we've got covenant trying to punch through, which would be the whole front." Mat replied satirically.

"Fine smart ass, what have you planned?" Miguel pointed to the makeshift catapult.

"We were hoping to slow the covvies down with this thing of course it wouldn't last long, its only got 48 barrels and a limited amount of gas to move, so not much. I was going to draw the covenant into a constrictor tactic, you know get them and their vehicles into a position to which we could forcefully bog them down and crush them." Mat explained.

"That sounds like it could work, but there's one problem, I've got sights on roughly a final push by the covenant, they're hitting us with gunships in the next 5 minutes, unless you've got AA batteries packed in some hole." He said in a rather calm fashion.

"Well then we've got a problem." Mat exasperated tiredly.

They had no AA weapons, at least nothing to drop a fully armed covenant phantom drop ship with shields. They might have to try something more desperate.

>"What about the falcons?"<p>

"They're armed, but they're not made for fights in the air with phantoms, we'd need a Helios Gunship or a Wasp with heavy armaments to go and pick those things out of the sky." He replied crushingly.

"Damn, then we'll have to draw the bastards into the town, let them get in close and hopefully stick some of our M-140 Bayonet Mines onto the hulls." He said to himself.

"The old fashion, stick and run? Isn't that a little too simple?" Miguel asked.

"Yes, but we've got no choice in this matter, unless you intend to sacrifice our falcons." Mat replied.

"Damn, well then, no I don't have any other idea, at least nothing that would be practical at this point in time." He finished just in time to have his statement punctuated by the coms.

"Sir, covvies hitting us hard, they've landed across from us and have deployed 3 wraiths and 2 revenants and a fuck ton of troops, I've got light shielded and armoured enemy ghosts spreading their troops across the range. I think we might lose first line in 20 minutes." Luke reported.

"Acknowledged corporal, hold there." Miguel replied.

"Looks like we should hurry up." Mat added.

It was just then that a yellow stallion appeared, he motioned to the catapult. Mat still hadn't a clue as to what the being was trying to wave about; Miguel however knew the Equestrian language and asked.

>"What the hell are you trying to wave about?"<p>

The stallion stared at Miguel in surprise and sighed in relief.

>"Thank Celestia; I was hoping to get to speak to someone. I was trying to ask was. Where do you need our lorry?"<p>

"You'll know soon enough, my fellow officer here has an engineer planning to use it as a catapult, but you'll have to wait a bit longer for the engineer to fix up the last details." He replied.

"Okay, thanks partner, but where did you need us?" The yellow stallion asked.

Before he could reply Matthis asked.

>"What the hell is this thing asking about?"<p>

"That's a 'he' Mat, and he's rather interested in deploying locals around here." Miguel replied duly.

Matthis looked at the male and looked at what he was carrying.

>"Miguel, I think that it's probably a good idea that they withdraw, I mean they can oversee the evacuation, but the front is too hot even for them."<p>

He relayed the argument to the yellow stallion.

>"My fellow officer here doesn't think you'll be of much use at this point in time, he suggests that you take care of your own while we fight it out."<p>

"Are ya kidding me? This is our home, this is APPLEOOOSA! T'aint fair, we have our livelihoods to defend here, and by golly we'll defend our home, or my name ain't Braeburn!" Brae replied definitively.

Miguel went and relayed.

>"Well it's not helping Mat; Braeburn here wants to stay here, and with his people." Miguel shrugged.<p>

"Ain't that fucking niceâ€| we've got half a battalion's worth of covvies out there determined to rip us to shredsâ€|" Mat said satirically.

"Well I don't think we can turn them down, we don't know if they could do better." Miguel offered.

Mat looked at Miguel with disbelief, was this a UCAF officer of a helldiver unit a fellow helldiver unit vouching for an alien presence amongst the men? Well this was a sure as hell difference, Mat couldn't understand why he'd even go there. But then again this was a war zone. He had to make up his mind and fast, he could practically

hear the covvies bashing at the front lines right about now.

Mat sighed, he reluctantly replied. "Very well, bring out what they've got and stay in the buildings, I'll have red team split their troops up to guide each of these locals." Mat decided.

Miguel relayed the orders and he brightened up.
>"Thanks partner, this means a lot."<p>

"Not my place to judge anyway, you want to fight then you're free to do so." Miguel stated his opinion of it all.

Brae hurried off whistling to his local militia of stallions and mares with rifles and they jogged into the besieged streets to join the front line. Mat went over to Miguel and said.
>"You've got a lot of balls to be dragging others into a fight."<p>

"Well it is their war as well, no need to exclude them." Miguel thoughtfully added.

"Right, well looks like our front just got bigger, Miguel get with your men and defend the right flank I'll call you back should we need back up." Mat informed him.

Miguel acknowledged and headed off. He hoped that support arrived soon.

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8:59PM

Ponyville

The convoy arrived in the town of Ponyville not long after the deployment of the Falcon flight, Jackson had hoped that the boys in Appleloosa were holding out well. He had members of the next unit prepare, James was ready to get going, but without falcons back in the next hour they planned to use the rail line, at least until they had another issue.

"The line's been packed between here and Dodge Junction?" Jackson said in disbelief at the rail admin who was manning his post.

"Sorry but that's the news from the line to Appleloosa, we've completely packed the lines there and there's only one line. So trying to send other trains in between here and there is meaningless." The conductor explained.

"Okay, first of all if I can't move my men up to Appleloosa how the hell am I going to back those troops up?" He asked rhetorically.

"Ummâ€¦ I would suspect probably by car." The conductor shrugged.

"Never mind." He walked off shaking his head.

From the station he got back to the command post which was set up inside of the bulldog LAT, the marines were milling about for orders

and stood at attention at the arrival of Jackson.

>"It's a no go; they're packed on the line there."<p>

"Well shit." A marine tagged as J Miller said bluntly.

"That's right, we're right back in the shitter, bulldogs won't make best time over this terrain and we've only got so many bulldogs to spare. As for armour, forget it, we've got no tanks here. The HVT won't damn make it in time, Toby would have to trek the distance on a 4.5 ton killing machine and walk it back." Jackson sighed at this predicament.

"Well we do have James." One of the other marines offered.

James was sitting on a bulldog strapping some more ammo mags and a couple of grenades, his change to Spectre class armour made it rather obvious that he intended to travel light, that was if Jackson gave him the go ahead. But of course there had to be a better way, and Jackson didn't just one marine to be all the support that his men were going to get.

There was a brief gust of wind as something shot past at a blinding speed. Jackson looked to see a Spartan chasing after a blur of colours; he identified it as a local from the introduction at the outskirts of the Evergreen region. The Spartan was having trouble keeping up, he identified the soldier as Jerome.

"Ha I can do this in my sleep!" The rainbow Pegasus teased.

Jerome was tagging behind purely because of the number of objects in his way, but his reaction time was keeping him in tune with any additional obstacles. He wasn't as fast as Kelly now that he thought of it, but he was still fast. But damn this mare was keeping him on his toes, he was barely tailing her.

They reached the local school house before they turned around at the flag and began a mad dash back to the other side of town, as they made their return run, a figure stepped into the road. They both braked meters before reaching the person in the road. Jerome identified the Colonel and greeted him.

>"Colonel Jackson, is there something you need?" He asked passively.<p>

"Not you Spartan, just her." He pointed at Rainbow.

RD noticed the colonel and looked in surprise.

>"Wait you need me?" She brightened up.<p>

"Well not just you, but out of necessity I need you to get your fellow pegasi, what were they called again, the 'Wonderbolts'? He asked.

RD almost exploded in delight and saluted avidly.

>"Right sir, I'll get the wonderbolts here ASAP!"<p>

"WAIT!" He couldn't finish asking for the other pegasi before she bolted off.

Jerome walked over to Jackson and stated duly.

>"She's rather excited."<p>

"No kidding." Jackson rolled his eyes.

Jerome departed for his squad and Jackson got back to the bulldogs where his command staff was wondering what the colonel had planned.

>"So I guess you've come up with some brilliant plan to aid the guys at Appleloosa?"<p>

"Well better that than having to wait any longer, if these Equestrians want to go try their hand in war, we'll give them the chance." Jackson replied.

The command staff didn't need to wait long; RD practically dragged the 6 members of the wonderbolts from their bird's eye view of the area to the staging ground in moments. The cluster of pegasi weren't too happy that she'd gone and rushed an explanation and zipped them all to the ground in a flurry of flaps.

"Okay, hereâ€¦ they are." RD said with an exhausted salute.

"Rainbow was it? I was trying to ask you to send out a message to all willing volunteers who'd like to help out at Appleloosa." Jackson informed the tired Pegasus.

RD looked sheepishly and smiled.

>"Whoops."<p>

"Well at least you've gotten the people we needed to speak to first, so thanks, but you could have done it without dragging them here." Jackson told her.

"Right, so should I gather the others?" RD asked.

"Sure, tell them to meet us here, we just need to go over a plan. Dismissed." He saluted the Pegasus to humour her.

RD jumped up and zipped over Ponyville looking for the various members of pegasi to get over to the command post. Jackson meanwhile got back to his briefing.

>"I'm surprised to say hello, I've been hoping to speak with all of you about a plan that I have conceived about supplying my men at Appleloosa with support, now I know you all want to go out and play your hands in the battleâ€¦"<p>

"Damn straight." A dark navy haired Pegasus with blue skin interrupted.

"Okayâ€¦ we need some of you and other pegasi to go and make a support run." Jackson stated directly.

"What?" There was a whole chorus of objections to the idea of a simple milk run.

He raised his hand and silenced them.

>"Look here, I didn't tell you the entire plan; we need some pegasi to go with you to make a quick supply drop, hopefully enough to take down any armour or aircraft for you to provide continued support. As for you in general, we'd like you to engage in the battle."<p>

A mumble of agreement came from the various wonderbolts.

>"So wait how are we supposed to fight them? I thought you said our weapons weren't capable to deal with covenant tech?"<p>

"I did say that, but seeing as we don't have much choice, we're willing to arm you with some of our weapons. Probably not the most agreeable plan, but with the situation spiralling out of control for our men, I'd like you to get a few of our lower recoil rifles and provide air support against enemy fliers for a while." Jackson explained.

"Now that sounds like a battle." A yellow and orange Pegasus female stated.

"Well it might sound fun, but banshees are not nice things to fight, and for good reasons we need you to be able to fight. So how many of you are actually skilled in weapons?" He asked.

Only 3 members of the wonderbolts shot their hands up.

>"Okay that's not too goodâ€¦!"<p>

"Hey Soarin didn't you have prior military training back at boot?" The yellow Pegasus mare asked.

"Not that formal, more like my buddy and I got access to a few rifles and started shootings stuff for fun." Soarin sheepishly smiled.

The yellow mare face-palmed.

>"Well isn't this great."<p>

"So if we don't have enough numbers, what about the royal guards? I'm sure that they could spare some guards to help, or the Equestrian Enforcers, sure they're not a really large army, but they do have training." Soarin suggested.

"Well any of them that can fight will do well to help, we don't have much time to be sitting around much longer, the falcon flight will be back in 15 minutes and they'll take another 10 to rearm and then redeployment would take another 1 hour, so we need get this don't in under that time." Jackson stated clearly.

They agreed and dispersed the non-combatants of their team to go retrieve local Pegasus guards, it didn't take too long, and they returned in short order with RD who had brought out a half a dozen or so pegasi. RD reported in first and said.

>"These are all the ponies that I said they'd like to volunteer, including myself of course."<p>

"Thanks Rainbowâ€¦ Dash?" He tried to recall.

"Yeah that's me." RD said proudly.

Next was the cluster of pegasi personnel, Soarin introduced the officer.

>"I got the guards who wanted to join up and some of others. This here'sâ€¦!"<p>

"I can introduce myself blue boy." The female officer in command interjected.

Soarin mumbled a few curses and walked off in annoyance. The female officer introduced herself.

>"Greetings Colonel, I am Lieutenant Sure Steel, I've heard a bit about you from the first escort that accompanied Miguel's flight to Evergreen. I must say, you've gotten quite a reputation, both your military and technology is something that's impressive."<p>

"Thank you for the compliment. But you already know what you're here for right?" He asked.

"Yes, Soarin explained the necessity of going out to Appaloosa rather breathlessly, but we got the jist of what he was trying to tell us." She replied.

"Well then this should be more enlightening. The UCAF troops we have at Appaloosa are probably running low on ammo in the next 30 minutes if they're sustaining heavy fire, but more to the point, we couldn't arm them with heavy weapons. To put it simply, you need to escort these volunteers to Appaloosa and drop off these heavy weapons crates. This isn't a milk run, you'll get your chance to fight, provide the ground troops with some sort of air support until all hostiles are eliminated or the town is overrun." Jackson explained.

"Well that's simple enough and what about our weapons?" Steel asked.

"Well we intended to give you our weapons, at least our less than powerful weapons, you can't handle heavy recoil rifles so we decided to give you our Dragoon AR-30s, those carry a 7.85mm AP mags and have low light scopes with holo-sight indicators, you'll have to adjust for wind. And we'll throw in some grenades and 40mm grenade attachments, for the enemy fliers." He offered.

"Wow that seems a lot more than what we're packing." Steel perplexed.

"Well it's there for you now, but you might want to get some quick testing on the rifles before you try using them out in the field, the Dragoons have been known to have freezing issues in high altitudes compared to the older Drake AR-25s." He advised.

The group followed the colonel to a small weapons cache set up under his orders; it held a number of rifle racks, he pulled out the nearest crate and showed them the rifle.

>"Okay this is going to be short, but the rifle is damn easy to use, a child could use itâ€| well actually children do use these rifles. But to the point, the rifle has 3 settings, burst, controlled fire, and single, and then we have the safety on the left side of the rifle near to the trigger guard. The rifle itself weighs in at 8 pounds, relatively light when unloaded. It's about 6 feet long, made mostly out of poly carbon fibre parts. There's rails on the top to attach and de-attach equipment, but all of them have the same thing on them so don't pull off anything, unless it gets broken. There's a flashlight and laser guider, there's also a bayonet, but you'll need to pull this piece at the front of the barrel downwards and slide the bayonet out and then push it back up to lock the bayonet into place, aside from that, I can't really tell you anything else."<p>

He showed them all the sections of the rifle and gave it to Steel,

she held the rifle and memorised the pieces of the weapon.

>"This is pretty light, mind if I buy one later?"<p>

"I'm sure we'll think of something, at this point, just take it and get over to the practice range my boys are using nearby, you'll need to get a quick test in and then get going, that's about all I can do at this point in time, hopefully you won't encounter many fliers above Appleloosa." Jackson finished.

A black male Pegasus civilian with a bluish white head of hair asked.

>"Do we get new duds?"<p>

Jackson thought about it and then replied.

>"No."<p>

"Awwwâ€¦" They moaned.

Jackson felt like hitting his head into a wall.

>"Fine." He sighed.<p>

They all cheered. Jackson led them over to the requisitions officer at the next bulldog transport when they arrived at a rather humorous scene.

>"Why is there no coffee in this damned truck? And what sort of bed do you call this? I was offered a proper accommodation why has none of you given me anything comfortable bedding? I demand that you give the great and powerful Trixie what she needs to sleep!"<p>

"Will you quit fucking whining?" The annoyed officer shouted in annoyance.

"This is whining? I'm complaining, so do you want whining? Here you goâ€¦ Oh all of this dirt on the benches is ruining my cloak and the horrible stench of musk in these transports and dreadful, why is there no damn channel for 'Phoenix Down'? And what is that stain on the truck floor? Is there no room for a cooler?" The blue magician seemed to edge the officer further into insanity.

Jackson decided to step in.

>"Okay what the hell is going on here corporal?" He addressed the officer.<p>

"This woman decided to charge for accommodations with the UCAF over her damaged home, so one of the jackasses in our unit convoy decided to assign her to us." The corporal replied.

"Well if it wasn't for the fact that you have such terrible accommodation, I wouldn't be complaining now would I?" She huffed and stuck her nose up.

"Oh for the loving fuck of Ava will you shut up?" The corporal shouted.

"HOW DARE YOU! Don't you tell the Great and Powerful Trixie to shut upâ€¦" Trixie bristled.

"Well then how about thisâ€¦ WILL YOU PLEASE GO FUCK YOURSELF!" He yelled with an amplifier.

The whole area went deaf for about a minute with dogs yelping as far as Canterlot. Jackson recovered and reprimanded the soldier.

>"Corporal, don't fucking violate the terms of using equipment in urban environments outside combat zones, you'll be receiving a full clean up detail in the next outburst!"<p>

"Sorry sir, but I really needed to get that out of my system with this damned flipping chick, she's been yelling about everything on the trip here for the past few hours. Seriously it's like fucking hell listening to her." The soldier replied angrily.

"Then cool it, I'll deal with her, you need to suit these Equestrians up with the appropriate gear, they have my permission and also, sort out what heavy weapons need to be deployed at Appleloosa and crate and ship them out with the civilians I've marked out here." He handed over a pad with all content details.

"Right sir, I'll get on it." The marine saluted and hurried off to help the ponies.

Jackson decided to address the female magician.

>"I can see why they call you Greatâ€|"<p>

Trixie recovered enough and replied haughtily.

>"Because I'm great with magic, no one can compete with me!"<p>

"How about me?" Another voice asked.

Trixie froze in place and turned to see the approaching Twilight with a few of her friends.

>"Umm, I should get going."<p>

Trixie hurried off inside the bulldog and stayed silent afterwards.

>"So I take it you two have met in the past?"<p>

"More or less in that sense." Twilight replied with a shrug.

"Okay, so who want to party?" Pinkie appeared with a tray of what looked like caps.

"Wait what do you mean party? We're in the middle of a crisis here." He said in absolute disbelief.

"Yeah isn't it exciting? We're going off to war! And princess Celestia and Luna are coming over here with all of Equestria's local troops to help defend, but before that, we need a good luck and hope you survive party for all of those troops!" She replied cheerfully.

"Okay now why do I have the feeling this isn't going to end well?" Jackson asked himself.

"Oh by the way, do you mind that Rarity's taken a couple of your troops?" Twilight asked.

"What?" He said in shock.

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"I'm going to kill, whoever came up with this idea!" Sargent Cooper growled as the female unicorn took measurements of his body.

Rarity had commandeered a whole unit of UCAF marines, just by tell them that this was a very important mission, and of course she had permission from her princess and Jackson to do so, even though she only had permission from Celestia to help. She defined the art of military fashion as helping so this was what she intended to do.

"How in the hell do we get roped into this?" Private First class Coue asked.

"I don't flipping know, but I'm taking a nap." Griffin replied lying on a nearby chair.

"Well good for you, I think I find this rather better than going into the field." The ass kisser Corporal Evans stated.

"Like you could do anything but radio in airstrikes and call for support FNG, you're lucky that Jackson hasn't pulled the carpet from under your ass." Corporal Lee pitched.

Rarity busily checked for good colours for the marine's uniforms, of course all they ever wore was green, khaki or black and grey, so there wasn't much to use for them. She was determined though and they admired that, at least until she went on her ballistic rant about how their armour makes them look so old. Or how their suits looked like they needed a polish, or how much Coue needed to go to a salon and get a haircut, or how Lee should go to the spa and get a full massage from the Spa Twins.

"Man, why am I even in this Chicken shit outfit?" Reggie asked himself.

"I take offence to that!" An orange girl with purple hair said angrily in one of the changing rooms.

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(Okay sorry guys been very busy, I didn't know what to write about first, but this is going into the conflict so, I've decided to go wing it as best as I could for now. I need to go and write up a lot of catch up chapters for other fics, so I'll see you around.)

Also:

Lunarassassin- I have decided to add you and a few others into the fic,

Thunderlane has joined

Flitter and Cloudchaser have been added

Shining Armour I hope will arrive for the next chapter

The conclusion of the battle of Appleloosa will be coming and the next few chapters are going to be based on both civilian and military

so I'll mix it up a little.

12. Chapter 12

CH12

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Solaris Complex

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9:10 PM

Ponyville- Makeshift Base- Alpha

At the requisitions officer's bulldog transport the corporal was busy trying outfit a whole group of foreign beings with human equipment, which turned out to be the worst thing that had happened since the Viking King Skull Splitter ordered a thousand helmets with the horns on the inside. The Equestrians had no room for their wings and it was proving to be a very annoying problem, and after a while, the corporal decided on the one thing that could fix it.

He took a plasma cutter and sliced holes into the armour for the pegasi, it didn't take long, as he knew how to cut the sections out without ruining too much of the armour, of course there was the fear that the armour now being open and with pegasi wings would make them easy targets for enemy fire.

Short on time, the corporal didn't think about it and just gave them a warning about being struck from behind, and also what not to get hit by.

>"Okay, the MKVIII BDU wasn't made for heavy combat, so it's pretty light compared to what I'm wearing, but as a word of warning, the suit's armour plating is made out of energised titanium alloys and gel layers to protect against specifically plasma weapons, you'll be safe from medium powered hits and light plasma fire. If you take fire, cool down the armour by diving, because if the armour gets heated in one section it can melt to your skin." The warnings made some of them wince at the thought of having their skin melted to the suit's interior.
"And also, you're going up against enemy banshees, they're light and fast, they can hit up to 450km/h in under 3 minutes so for the love of all things sane don't go chasing them, not unless you can travel at those speeds. Now they do technically have to slow down to engage low targets and enemy fighters. So you'll have the chance to fight them, but keep an eye out for enemy fuel weaponry, they're green bursts of energy and your suits are useless against that kind of attack, so dodge the green things." They nodded.

>"Okay so that's all I can provide as a quick introduction into using the suits, take a couple of sprays if you need to cool a hit, they're over there, and take these medical injectors, they'll heal any wound as long as it isn't life threatening." He motioned to a crate filled with green and blue vials.<p>

"Any questions before you do quick gun and run?" He asked rubbing his hands in the cold.

"Can I get a better crotch piece for my suit? This one kind of rubs insideâ€| " A light purple Pegasus said embarrassed.

"Okay, aside from the crotch pieces, I'll take it that there's absolutely nothing else that's relevant to the mission?" He asked everyone.

No one answered and he said.

>"Okay you I'll fix the crotch piece for, the rest of you hurry up and get going." The group dispersed with the one mare hurrying over to get the uncomfortable itch patched up.<p>

In the pegasi cluster, RD had a blast; she felt the adrenaline rush, just like when she performed the Sonic Rainboom, or the time she got into that fight with that dragon or all of those other adventures. She was taking this mission rather well. She felt like she was important now. Of course not everyone was in the same mood, a few seemed rather passive considering what they planned to do, and the military fellows seemed the most focused. The wonderbolt members had their own idea to the whole thing, and Spitfire arrived to see RD.

"So, I guess we're finally teaming up, eh Rainbow?" Spitfire asked.

"Yeah, this is really something; I've never been in battle, except those small things the princess asked of me and the girls." RD replied ecstatically.

Spitfire had a very grim look on her face when she said that.

>"Something wrong?" RD asked.<p>

"No, not much, but I don't think going into a war is the best thing that's happened RD. Equestria's been in minor incidents from time to time, but full scale war is something you shouldn't take lightly, especially since the enemy we're going up against is very dangerous. It's a bad idea to get cocky out in the field." Spitfire replied warningly.

RD felt as if her optimism was misplaced, and she felt rather disappointed.

>"Oh, well, I thought that this was something we would all you knowâ€| be interested, in war isn't something we've ever experienced."<p>

"Yeah, well make sure not to get distracted, there are enough odds being stacked against us as it is. Make sure to keep an eye out for the others. Me and the other wonderbolts will be flying in a tight formation, I'm sure all of the royal fliers will be doing likewise, for you and those unexperienced fliers, try to keep on course and do not let the carriers get hit." She advised.

"Right, I'll keep an eye out." She replied thinking deeply to herself.

"And relax, a little, don't stress yourself or you'll get distracted, these hostiles from what we heard should be rather predictable at least that's what they say." Spitfire reassured RD.

RD understood and replied aptly.
>"Okay let's get to target practice."<p>

The group of pegasi ended up at a sandbagged and walled area, it was 90 meters in length and 30 meters across. There were a number of target markers being set up on auto guide and activation, these markers would record hits. The instructor was a nameless fellow who had a full BDU; he didn't go with name introductions and just said.

"I'm sure all of you know what you need to do, but first take a practice run on the targets, then do a quick reflex test and then finish up. The requisitions officer will hand out extra ammunition, but that's as much as he'll give you. After that you're on your own." He advised.

They began in rows of 4, firing off in bursts; of course it didn't take long for them to see the number of good shooters. The first row of targets were close together and then the next row was spaced apart from each other, and the final was a row of moving targets, they didn't have time for much of actual range due to time. But from what RD and Spitfire observed, they could tell that they were a mite in trouble.

"How in the buck did only half of these guys get hits?" RD face palmed.

The situation was about as bad as it could get, the non-coms couldn't shoot for crap, and RD felt like this was becoming a rather serious problem, if they ever got engaged only half of them would be able to shoot. But there were heading into town, so if they did engage, at least some members would be able to head to shelter while the rest fought above.

But the fact that they were now only down to half their numbers didn't reassure her that things weren't going to go too well. Spitfire sighed.

>"We better get going." She motioned for them to follow.<p>

They regrouped at the Bulldog transport, the Corporal handed them their spare ammo and gave them a quick goodbye.
>"Don't get killed, and also congratulations you've just graduated short term training."<p>

They looked at each other when he said the statement rather ominously. They all bunched up and prepared to lift off; picking up their crates of ammo and weapons they took off in a whole group, Spitfire commanded one group and RD followed behind her. Sure Steel took her own force and they split into two groups.

RD felt the rush of the night wind, it wasn't uncomfortable thanks to Pegasi biology of living in high atmospheric conditions they could survive the extremities of night temperatures. The groups headed directly to Appleloosa, RD was about to get her first taste of war.

XXXXX

9:45 PM

Appleloosa

Miguel fired into another cluster of freshly deployed grunts, the stubby bastards shredded under the stream of HEAP rounds, the bullets bursting chunks of their flesh away or blowing open skulls. The whole field was littered with the corpses of covenant troopers which attempted to overwhelm their position in the past 10 minutes.

Of course this tactic hadn't worked to their advantage and they were repulsed constantly. But the marines and helldivers were now running short on ammunition aside for the marksmen and Equestrians. The locals seemed to be doing well even though using antiquities to fight with; the rifles were lever action 40-70 ammo and packed a punch, kinetically speaking.

The covenant shields tended to fold after 10 shots from the rifles, but those were regular elites, which did leave the marines most of the covenant officers to deal with. It didn't take long to deal with them, but infantry forces were the damn problem, they had no means to deal with sheer numbers.

Miguel calculated the situation in his head, the rate in which they were going at; they had least another hour's worth of ammo to deal with the constant stream of covenant troops, which in honest opinion wasn't the best of things to be stuck with. The wraiths were busy raining death from afar and fliers strafing their position.

Miguel had a feeling that this battle was getting worse, the marines had suffered multiple wounds, 2 serious ones and a few less serious, as for one helldiver he was downed by melee suffering fractured ribs and a few bleeding organs. As for the rest of them, low ammo and wall of covvies wasn't the way they'd like to go down.

Jace fired from his elevated position trying to provide cover, of course that wasn't as helpful dealing with the various cannon fodders attempting to overwhelm them. Grunts seemed to pile onto each other into a meat wall around their position, of course this was nothing new, the covenant used this tactic when sieging an enemy.

Running low on mags, Miguel got onto the com.

>"Jace any signs of our support?" He yelled over the roar of the battle.<p>

"Not yet, but I did receive a short range chatter, supports on their way." He replied as he picked off a few more grunts.

Miguel watched the skies as the figures in the distance became clear, the silhouettes of multiple pegasi, he didn't need to tell the marines, they probably care after the wall of enemies stopped pouring onto them.

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RD was starting to feel the burn of flying in a line for a full 20 minutes, the reason it took them a while longer was due to some rather annoying amount of smoke and dust in the skies, the team had to duck lower to spot the town, and also to note was that the fliers were not used to carrying canisters as heavy as they were.

They reached the skies above Appleloosa in short order, but they

faced a new threat, the covenant fliers in the skies that they could see seemed to break formation and engage them. The non-coms panicked in the initial volley scattering them, RD had to help her fellow pegasi to head to the target location.

>"Okay Flitter, straight down. The rest of you follow her!" She barked at the nervous fliers.<p>

The pegasi acknowledged and dove after Flitter, meanwhile the military trained pegasi broke to engage, and Spitfire had been itching for this fight. The first fliers went in close to fire their ARs, the attack seemed rather effective, but the banshees scattered to engage them in one on one dogfights instead.

They broke off into their own attack; RD quickly joined the fray. Being the fastest flier she found that she could chase down the covenant fliers with ease, but the only problem was trying to drop them quickly enough. She fired in heavy sustained bursts, chewing through the light armoured banshee canopy, the rounds punctured enough to cripple the fighter and send it barrel rolling down to the ground.

She cheered at her first confirmed kill; it seemed rather exhilarating at first.

>"Take that alien scumbag!" She remarked.<p>

But that wasn't the end, RD had to duck as a score of fighters went to engage her, she found herself on the receiving end of a wall of plasma fire. She arced through the skies keen on being blown out of the sky by the concentrated wall of fire. She spiralled downwards avoiding a green bolt of energy, it detonated after it missed her, and she could only assume that was a heavy weapon of the fighter.

As for the other pegasi, the fight wasn't going so well. Spitfire had dropped 2 in the engagement but found that she couldn't oust the 3 others chasing her down. Soarin was having his own time trying to get away from the fighters and the various other pegasi were busy dealing with their own problem, Sure Steel was picking the fighters off, but surely she wasn't dealing with the scale of the battle too well.

Thunderlane was hit by plasma and had withdrawn to the town; Cloudchaser had a rough time keeping pace with an enemy fighter, to the extent that she gave up and tried with another enemy fighter. The whole mess above the skies were sure impressive, but not exactly the best situation, the pegasi were just out numbered.

RD caught up with Spitfire as they were pursued by 5 fliers.

>"Spitfire, what's going on with that ground support?" RD asked as they both dodged plasma fire.<p>

"Not a clue, the teams have dropped them off, but I think they're having trouble getting locks on the enemy fighters." Spitfire replied unloading another clip into a pursuing fighter.

Time wasn't on their side and it was easy to see that they were going to get knocked out of the skies with the constant pursuit of enemy fliers. RD thought of a half-baked plan, and then smiled as she turned and faced Spitfire.

>"I've got an idea, but it might not work." She exclaimed.<p>

"Well better than nothing." Spitfire replied with a smile.

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Miguel and the marines were happy to have the pegasi here, it was a sure sight. They unloaded all of the heavy weapons and began to arm themselves with HEAT-M280 missile launchers, the variants were multi-fire missiles added guidance systems for short and medium range targets. They each weighed a total of 7.2kg without the missiles; each missile was weighed in at 5.9kg each, the weight of the weapon required someone with sturdy construct or with exo-skeleton armour. The launcher fires a total of 3 missiles all are Invictus class missiles, each missile carries a high explosive charge capable of ripping apart 450mm of covenant armour. Multiple variations of shaped explosives are available for use.

He loaded the explosives up and handed it over to the heavy weapons specialist, it was then that his com rang.

>"This is Miguel." He answered as he looked above.<p>

"Miguel, this is RD, I've got a few bogies tailing me and Spitfire. We need help." RD exclaimed as she and Spitfire danced through the skies.

RD explained her idea.

>"We're going to flyby the town hall, when we approach the south side, open up."<p>

Miguel replied.

>"Roger that."<p>

He tapped on Jace's shoulder.

>"Jace I've got a few Pegasi coming around the town hall, the bell tower's south side, I need you to take 4 others and cover their approach, take them while their still in the air."<p>

The Sargent acknowledged.

>"I'll get the young bloods on it."<p>

Jace sprinted off to grab a few extra weapons, he barked out.

>"I need 4 volunteers to provide support."<p>

A raise of hands from his left and he waved them over. The 4 marines followed after him as they dodged through the town as continuous plasma fire rained down, it had dulled a little since the arrival of the pegasi but still the covenant were pressing. It was merely now whoever had weathered the fight would prevail.

Jace held his team until they were in range, as RD and Spitfire passed by the team got their sights on the targets, the Banshees closed in and they waited for his order.

>As they closed the distance he yelled.
"Fire!"

The skies erupted in a fury of light as rounds penetrated the night skies, the fighters were perforated by the hail of fire, AP rounds tore into the light armoured hulls tearing the pilots on the inside to shreds, and the fighters were quickly dispersed. Veering off to withdraw or crash into the ground nearby. Jace reported over the coms

to Miguel.
>"Fliers are down."<p>

"Good keep your team up there and spot for the missile teams they're going to need clear locks on enemy vehicles, also target any additional fliers that are still engaged. I'm sure the pegasi would like to keep their tails from being singed." Miguel replied.

Jace did as he was ordered, meanwhile Miguel received communication from RD.

>"Thanks for the assist Miguel, awesome timing." The rainbow maned Pegasus thanked.<p>

"RD how many more fighters can you see above?" He asked.

"Not many, I think that was the last of their reinforcements, I'd say that's a good kill. I'll be on the ground with Spitfire soon; we'll mop up the rest up here." She reported.

"Good, I'm going to need all of the help I can get down here." He replied.

RD zoomed around in the skies with the remaining pegasi, it wouldn't be much longer.

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"Infidels, filth of the universe, pathetic and weak, and yetâ€¦ how have they managed to repulse more than 2 attacks?" An angered voice cut into the silence of the command deck of the 'Armour of Contempt'.

The elites inside the room looked at each other nervously; they knew that failure was assured death at the hands of their fleet master. Then one zealot commander stepped forwards to face judgement.

>"Fleet Master, I had underestimated the sheer brutal stubbornness of these human filth, and their alien allies, I will not fail you again." Commander Okuros Yuvai bowed in shame.<p>

Vesdarea stood up off of his command chair, he strode forwards down the throne like command chair and to his subordinate. The elite zealot master stood towering over his minor and grabbed him by the throat in a swift motion and Okuros began to choke as he was hoisted above.

>He growled.
"You have failed me more than enough Okurosâ€¦" He watched as his subordinate began to suffocate.

His senior command was apprehensive at the thought of just letting their superior openly killing another one of their officers, especially when they were starting to run short on capable commanders. But after a moment's thought the commander seemed distracted as if he was discussing something with someone else, then he frowned and he dropped the commander onto the deck and let him breathe before stating ominously.

>"You have one more chance Okuros, fail me and consider yourself spent."<p>

Okuros coughed a reply and then bowed shakily as he exited the command deck. Vesdarea then turned away from his commanders and

ordered them.

>"Dismissed, and be this as a warning, you will pay if you fail me on any given task!"<p>

His command staff nodded and departed from the command deck to their stations, they knew that there was something strange with their commander, especially since their initial arrival. His aggressiveness was something that was to be feared, he should have killed the incapable officer, but this time he seemed distracted by something.

Unbeknownst to his commanders there was something else on the mind of Vesdarea. In the silence of the command deck he growled out.

>"That fool deserved to die for his failure."<p>

The echoing of a feminine voice replied presumptuously. ******"That fool is necessary for your survival, and as such it is bad morale for your troops to hear of further depletion of capable officers. And here I thought I was with an actual officer."****** She remarked snidely.

His temper flared and he smashed his fist into the command chair and vented.

>"Do not give me a reason to purge you!"<p>

The room's shadows shifted and rippled and a corporeal form appeared and stated.

>"As you wish, but I criticise your skills as an actual officer, not some holy warrior, your overblown religion has nothing that could interest me, and I have my own score to settle, trust me, if I was trying to try your skills as a warrior, you would know." She smirked.

Vesdarea growled and settled back in his chair, he knew trying to attack this being was pointless, her ability to remain intangible was outside of his control, he was no human vanguard nor was he a prophet with access to the holy technology to devastate the incorporeal beings that plagued him. He simply went on with whatever he had been doing since the beginning, seeking vengeance and completing the journey.

For moment he wondered why he even bothered to send a squad out to retrieve that blasted piece of scrap in the ruins of what his specialists had told him was a safe house of knowledge, it was anything but, stone works and a pile of scrap. But his team brought back the scrap that had energy readings similar to the forerunner immense psycho-reactive tech. He assumed it was a piece of armour destroyed years ago.

He ordered a small team of engineers to place the pieces inside of a casing and seal it in his room. After a day or two he began to notice shadows in the corners of his eyes and dreams of a human like being that had a horn and a pair of wings, she taunted him and caressed his dreams with his nightmares. He finally gave in and accessed the armour; this entity called itself Nightmare Moon. Why in the name of the light it even had such a name baffled him.

He took it upon himself to aid the being, and it promised him that it would give him access to all of the ancient knowledge that he wanted, he had his doubts but this being seemed to know a lot of what the forerunners were. It made him cautious either way, there was unlikely

something else that this being wanted, and she intended to get it.

He then stated into the darkness.

>"The end of the journey begins at the dawn."<p>

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Appleloosa 10:05 PM

The marines had beaten the living crap out of the covenant and it wasn't much longer until reinforcements arrived from the falcon flight. Miguel had emptied his 4th last mag wiping off the ash from his brow, he could tell that the rest of his men were getting equally tired as he was, even if he didn't look like it, he had his adrenal glands running hot since he and the others landed.

His adrenaline rush was ending and he could hear the buzz of exhausting nearing, beating the covenant back more than once wasn't a task for the average marine company alone. He looked above and noted that RD and Spitfire had come down with all of the remaining pegasi, he counted 3 dead and 4 wounded, and the non-coms had remained out of sight helping with ammo distribution.

Jace and his AA team were still picking out anything above for the snipers, there wasn't too many things left around the town that was for sure, most of the covenant were either stragglers or desperate bands of loyalists out of options. It was a matter of waiting for the falcons to arrive to sweep the remains away.

At least that was the planâ€¦ it was then a dull roar seemed to emanate over a plateau nearby and a shadow seemed to approach from the surrounding wilderness. Anything that could see the shadow being cast immediately either ran or hid from this shadow. But as the shadow was cast the marines in Appleloosa began to notice something was coming.

"Major, I've got movement, silhouette incoming from points E-F, too large for normal transport, estimate size and shape 'corvette'." Jace advised urgently over the coms.

"Corvette? Does he mean a small naval ship?" Sure Steel asked quizzically.

Miguel felt his blood drain out, if the covenant were bringing out a corvette there were 3 possibilities and he didn't like either one of them.

>"Corvette means that they're dropping in something heavy, very heavy."<p>

[Tips- Covenant Military Tactics UCAF: N3324]

In the course of any given battle, the covenant fleets have a large disposable class of corvettes specifically for short range transport of heavy armour or shock forces, this tactic was utilised by the covenant in 2541 after the gruelling campaign on Ovoro Ili, the covenant adapted the UCAF rapid assault deployment of spider tanks 'Tarantula MATV-179'.

The method of rapid deployment by light ships made the battle of Ili

by far the most rapid and bloodiest conflicts in the Tantering Cluster to date. Large forces could be quickly deployed by simply dropping them from a manageable height and speed; usually vehicles have a drop threshold to deploy and eliminate any dangers to vehicle or persons.

Deployment has however adapted for multitude of fields, UCAF shock amour, MVFs Mobile Versatile Frame Exo-skeletons were the next combat force to be adapted for shock drops, and the covenant also adapted similar methods of deployment. Then there was the reconnaissance deployment which enabled easy deployment of large recon forces to scour vast regions quickly and secure early objectives.

There are a multitude of various tactics involved; these mark only a handful

[End Transcript]

Miguel went over his coms and alerted his troops.

>"Contact, repeat contact with possible heavy armour, Class Type possibly platform 24, get your asses into cover!" He yelled.<p>

The marines seemed to shout out orders to take cover, RD and the others did likewise whatever was coming that had the marines ducking for cover wasn't going to be good. In the distance the rumble of the earth increased, it was still dark, but it seemed as if a massive shadow had engulfed the moon in the night skies.

The humming of engines of the 1.1km ship continued to vibrate the ground, but the one thing it needed to do was drop off its package, coming to glass the town would be time consuming, so sending off something else to clean up was easier, also corvettes like the one coming didn't have a powerful enough energy projector, carrying large cargo was its purpose.

But even so, that didn't make the marines nervous at the sight of the oncoming ship, they'd all had plenty of combat experience in the field with enemy vessels and it didn't tend to end well for the defenders. The ship reached half a kilometre outside of the town and then slowed down to release its package.

Everyone heard the heavy groan of metal as it released itself from the grasp of the ship, it hurtled towards the ground at a few hundred meters and crashed into the desert ground with enough force to nearly topple the old wooden structures, everyone felt the earth seem to tremble at the feeling of the landing.

"What in the hell is that?" RD asked as she regained her balance.

"That is the sound of death on 4 legs." Miguel grimly replied.

From the landing a body of metal rose above the dust cloud and seemingly roared into the night sky. The sound was deafening, the marines on the other hand found this melancholy the sound of an old foe coming back to bite them in the ass.

>"Jace I need coms back to command tell them to scratch the support orders arm those damn falcons with heavy weapons and lancer cannons anything with HEAT is better than nothing at all!" Miguel shouted.<p>

Jace acknowledged and began yelling through com channels back to command team back at Ponyville. As for the marines and surviving defenders of the Appleloosa this was going to be one hell of a ride. The Scarab that was now awake seemed to fix its attention squarely on the defenders. RD and the other ponies stared at the monstrosity as the shadow moved away.

It was a dull green and purple armoured monster, 4 legs and over 60 meters high, it had a two eyes, both lime green, one situated above and the other situated below, the top one was mounted on some sort of pivot mount that had an elongated beak it shone bright enough to blind them, while the other eye was in a maw like mouth which emanated light the whole body length was bigger than the town.

Miguel examined the machine and stated ominously.

>"We've got an incoming platform 24, light assault scarab infantry compliment on board" <p>

"Heavy weapons won't do shit to that thing unless we aim directly for the projectors or the energy reactor." Jace reported.

"Then aim for the legs, I'll get the Equestrians the hell clear of this place before we all turn to ash." He replied before facing RD and the other ponies.

"Well I've got good news, we've repelled the covenant troops, bad news is that they've decided to cut losses and have decided to just burn the town with a scarab instead. I suggest you clear out as many people as you can, you've got no chance of fighting that thing with normal weapons at this point in time." Miguel advised them.

"Wait, but this is my home, damn it this is our home!" Braeburn gestured to the various Applelossians gathered.

"Well I'm sorry to tell you this, but this town's going to be a massive smoking crater in about 15 minutes, you can't stay because those things would shred you to pieces in seconds, I've got my men going at this thing with weapons barely effective at this range on something like that, so unless you could magically summon a tactical nuke or a heavy rail battery you're as good as dead." He told them aptly.

RD looked at him angrily she wasn't one to back down, but he was being damn serious about the scarab, she had a cool head next to her though. Spitfire agreed.

>"Come on RD, he's got a point, we can't get in close, we should help everyone else get to safety." <p>

RD saw the reason, she wasn't really convinced that this was the best option, but she really didn't have much of a choice. The scarab reared its head and opened its glowing maw of a head; it brightened enough to blind anyone without proper protection as it fired. A huge stream of fiery plasma spewed forth, it slammed into a building nearby and tore into with ease and then began to move into the nearby surrounding structures.

Marines bolted from the plasma shouting out screams of profanity and annoyance as they tried to regroup. Jace and his team guided a wave

of missiles out to hit the walker; of course this didn't do much, the scarab simply searched for more targets. Miguel urged them to leave.

>"You better get going now!"<p>

They nodded and got the hell out of there with the others to the evacuation point, hopefully help would arrive and soon.

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Ponyville 10:05 PM

Ponyville was still in a state of rush and hush, ponies wondering where in Equestria an army of aliens had materialised from. As for the UCAF their presence here left them rather stumped, they'd never been in the presence of many other species or races, aside from their mutually lethal allies of the Separatist Elites.

This place was rather quiet, too quiet, and it made a perfect place to start making noise, when they got the report in that the battle at Appleloosa was nearly over, it made them cheer. They had held off a chunk of the covenant loyalists off by themselves. Which is no easy feat, and to add to this, the Equestrians would be feeling the thrill of victory, even if it was a small one.

The Falcons had departed with the pack of reinforcements to help secure the remains of the damaged settlement, at least that what was supposed to happen, the base command centre was packed with marines setting up equipment and communication lines. Jackson in the midst of this mess was listening to reports from the settlement as Miguel came over the line.

"This is Major Miguel; command we've got a problem!" Miguel shouted.

Jackson answered the call.

>"Miguel what's the problem?"<p>

"Scarab, type 24 platform, this one's packing heat!" Miguel replied as another wave of plasma decimated another building.

Jackson felt his blood boil; he damn near hated the covenant for this, always bitter after a fight. He didn't have much of a choice, he'd have to send in something heavy, he replied.

>"What is that you need?"<p>

"Heavy support, air support or mobile armour!" Miguel replied.

"Acknowledged, hold your position, we're sending out what we've got." Jackson cut the line and addressed his chief engineer.

"Ken, you've got 10 minutes to rearm the falcons, get every available marine on that now!" He shouted.

Twilight Sparkle was inside the command centre as well, she was here purely as the liaison for the Equestrians, and also she reported straight to Celestia about the situation here. And then there was Rarity dealing with image and relations with the UCAF. Fluttershy was

out gathering some medical supplies and had volunteered to help with wounded. Twilight didn't entirely believe that was the best choice for the Pegasus, the wounded she'd soon face would not be exactly suffering from small broken limbs or cuts and concussions.

Pinkie Pie had gone off saying something about helping a group of marines out with looking for some R&R, she said they were pretty young but she did know where to take them, and then she vanished from view as if she stepped in through a hole in the universe. Trixie was off stomping around Ponyville again and Twilight was sure she was going to start trouble sooner or later.

As for the UNSC, they've been watching the whole situation intently, the woman named Anders had been picking over the combat reports in the centre and noting down pieces on paper what was going on, she did things sort of like Twilight, she might be OCD, but she wasn't sure yet. Twilight only observed the good doctor when she could.

The chief engineer with his orders exited the command tent and began to shout out for the falcons to be stripped down. However the number of marines required to rearm the fighters weren't enough, they had to call out for off duty men. Ken also noted one of the strongest members of the marines weren't exactly present, Ken asked to one marine.

>"Hey where the hell did the Tankers go?"<p>

"I dunno sir; they said they'd be getting a few drinks from a local pony with pink hair and some crazy curves." He replied with a shrug.

Ken figured that wherever they had gotten to, they'd better not start causing shit.

Meanwhileâ€¦|

In Ponyville's only bar the 'Singing Liquors' a lot of ponies were observing the chaos that was unfolding inside the bar. It was as if two trains had collided and were busy grinding against each other with startling pauses.

"I really love my Alcoholâ€¦|" A chorus of voices shouted.

"It makes me really Queer, I start myself with Bourbon, Wash it down with some cheap beerâ€¦|" They drank and then continued. "And then I chug some Red Wineâ€¦| Drinking Vodka is not enough; don't give me Gin and Tonic. Man that drink is pussy stuff, and then I go for some Jack Daniels, but I add a little twist I throw some Absinthe in the cup to make the bestest mixâ€¦|" A whole lot of cups hitting each other as it the chorus continued. "Now I'm starting to feel the buzz, but I'm still a ways away, man I better drink this Green Label, six glasses makes my dayâ€¦|" There was another clatter of cups before it continued. "Now I think it's safe to say, that I'm no longer in a funk *hic*, cause I've drunk enough to kill a horseâ€¦| I'm finally fucking drunk! *thud*"

Ponies stepped into the bar to see in one corner a group of humans sharing a table with a purple haired mare with the fruit bowl cutie mark and the pink haired ball of energy, they had all consumed what could be assumed would be around 90 litres of alcohol. Now what surprised them was the fact that the humans in question looked no

older than teens barely old enough to get their drivers licence let alone drink.

As the crowd began to pick out the various bottles of alcohol a human marine appeared and strode towards the table with what looked like a fire extinguisher. He stopped about a few feet from the table and then raised an eyebrow at the scene and then aimed the fire extinguisher before starting to spray them.

The group shot up in surprise at the feeling of cold water hitting them.

>"What?" One marine stated as he grasped his head.<p>

"You consumed about more alcohol to feed a fucking truck, now get the hell up!" The marine shouted.

"Ah not to loud gunny!" One marine groaned.

"Oh?" He picked up a horn and then before they could say anything the horn blared.

>"You've got 5 minutes to get the fuck up and help with rearming the damned falcons now rise and shine marines!"<p>

The response from the marines was instant, obviously years of training and also the reminder that their sergeant was not someone to be pissed with.

>"Sir yes sir!" They shot up as weary as they were.<p>

Pinkie Pie and Berry Punch were looking around in utter pain as the marines marched out of the bar and then they looked at each other before falling back into an alcohol induced coma.

XXXXX

Carousel Boutique had a buzz of ponies looking inside watching the unicorn fashionista do her thing, of course this wasn't entirely comfortable for the marines, but they kept their mouth shut about going back to get deployed so they remained. Rarity had gone through a whole team of marines in short order; she worked her magic rather quickly.

And also the marines don't tend to complain or move as much as her other customers do, this made her job a breeze, considerably more so because of the colour schemes she had designed, they were simple utilitarian and very formal. There was her planned formal uniform that she wanted to test soon on Miguel when he got back or the dark Naval uniform she had, and then there was the technical officer uniform she wanted to try.

For her this was going to be an experience alright.

XXXXX

On the other side of town near the hospital the marines had set up their medical operations, it wasn't active much, there were just wounded from the previous engagement and that was it. But they were preparing for heavy wounded to arrive from Appleloosa pretty soon. The medical hospital was busy giving the Equestrians a quick rundown of medical situations to be faced with when facing the covenant, of course many doctors and volunteer nurses and others didn't exactly

like the sight they were going to be faced with.

Sure the Ponyville doctors had their work cut out at times, but never to the sheer extent of what the UCAF had, there were procedures that even they hadn't seen in their lifetimes, and the amount of blood they'd be seeing was enough to put a knot in their stomachs. The volunteers didn't exactly like the sight of what they'd be facing, a few exited, but a lot of them stayed.

Fluttershy was in the back preparing for the worst; she had her notes out taking careful observations of what she'd be doing pretty soon. It was strange that Fluttershy had decided to join in volunteer medical operations; the other ponies honestly thought that she'd have been the first one to exit as soon as introductions began.

But she remained quiet in the back row watching silently at the number of procedures and operations for wounded. This was going to be a long night for the Equestrian volunteer medical corps.

XXXXX

Appleloosa 10:15 PM

Miguel ducked around a corner with his fellow helldivers; Jace had abandoned the post and was now joining in on the fight on the ground. The UCAF troops agreed on another plan of action, they had to lure the covenant walker into the town, and this was the best way, they'd hit from various blind spots and get the walker in closer. This was a hell of a risk considering that there were a number of things that could go wrong.

Miguel was taking the risk, but it was surely better than having to wait out the damn attack. As the marines waited patiently for the arrival of the walker, they felt the earth shaking as it strode into the edges of the town crushing anything underneath its legs. Miguel waited with his marines in the shadow of a broken building.

However something happened, the sound of the legs had stopped, either that meant it was looking or it was preparing to fire. Miguel only heard the sharp ionisation of the air as the building that he and his marines were hiding behind exploded; Miguel was thrown forwards into the walls of the opposing building. His suit absorbed most of the impact, but his body still felt the crushing force.

He slammed into the wall and then felt the world come back into focus, he could hear the shouts of the remaining members of Echo shouting and screaming out profanity and retreating from their position. Miguel's com was busted as he tried to call over to the commander of Echo. It was then that he realised that the walker was still on the edge of town, and it seemed to have decided to just burn the town from there instead.

He swore at his luck, he figured as much, the covenant weren't that stupid, especially when they lose a battle. The walker prepared to charge again, its maw glowing brightly as it aimed for the next row of buildings. But as it was about to fire, a high pitched whine rang through the air. Miguel watched as the head of the walker suddenly exploded, it didn't destroy the plasma projector, but it did knock it away.

The plasma fire sprayed sporadically as it lost cohesion. As the plasma cleared, Miguel noticed the face of the scarab had lost a chunk of its projector piece. That sort of firepower required to punch through half a meter of plating could only have come from a tank, a UCAF Death Adder class tank hunter.

It was then he also heard a variety of other weapons soon join the attack, 4 more shells impacted the armour of the walker sending it stumbling sideways. 30mm heavy machine guns, and 50cal mini-guns, a few Lancer M188 Anti-tank missiles as well as a barrage of 180mm moving artillery guns, all of these weapons he could identify as a technical unit.

It was then that he could hear a distorted message on his damaged com.

>"Confirm- its, al-1 units, eng-age an- route enemy walker."<p>

He could hear the sounds of UCAF armour, but not only armour a UCAF MVF-MKIII it was Titus class assault armour, a whole unit and some tanks. This was a damn welcoming sight for the marines.

>"The Dragoons are here." Was the last communication he heard before passing out. The battle finally begun.<p>

XXXXX

Okay lots to say little time to do all else, the images are from Sttheo I asked his permission to use these items months ago, and he's still allowed me to and yes, I've put a lot of time into this fic for some reason. Rather than just going on with all of my Halo/ME fics that are desperately needing updates.

Also beta readers please contact me on my PM, because I do have skype and if you'd like to receive any of my work, please PM first and then I'll give you access to things I've done, because pre-reading on the actual webpages have been a pain in the ass.

13. Chapter 13

CH13

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Rising Corona

XXXXX

Appleloosa 10:20PM

The Dragoons 221st technical division had arrived in town after being lost out in the desert for a week, they passed a nearby tribe of large humanoid beings that they identified as something called 'buffalos' and they directed them in the direction of the town, at least that's what they could tell from the language barriers they had encountered.

It took a day of using the translator to get a correct analysis of what was being said before they could get makeshift language translation of the buffalo. They were heading here after a day but

caught up with the noticeable amount of tracer fire and plasma exploding around so it was obvious that there was a battle occurring.

The dragoons hadn't had functioning long range com connections since the battle with the covenant in slip-space which really took a toll on their equipment; it left them without usable com lines. Now that they got here, they used their transponders for IFFs to make sure they didn't get fired on as they engaged.

The Dragoons had a total of 4 suits of MKIII Titus class units; each one had a unique set of armaments: The first suit was black with orange stripes and had the number marked 0122 had a shoulder mounted 105mm recoilless artillery rifle with a HMG-75 assault cannon, and 4 missiles pods of 5 85mm HEAT Warheads, 2 energised knives and a power fist. This suit was a regular variant of the MVF units.

The second suit was black and had red stripes on the shoulder with a knife in a red and silver circle on the shoulder, it had 4 infusion daggers, 2 multi-fire 88-CQWS Shotguns with attachments, 2 HC-45 pistols, 4 propulsion hand held HEAT launchers, 8 grenades of all purposes, and 2 assault gauntlets. This was the CQC armour variant.

Third suit was black suit with the number 0092, it sported the heaviest weapons array of the MVFs, 2 120mm HEAT Rail Batteries, 4 105mm missile pods, ablative heavy shield 2.4m thick plating. It sported a glowing patch of yellow that looked like someone had tattooed an image of an explosion on its side. This suit was definitely the heavy artillery suit.

The fourth and final suit was matte black and had chrome plating with an icon on its shoulder of an onyx hexagon with a sphere of blue in the middle, it carried the assault gear, and it was probably the commander's suit.

[CODEX: MVF- Mobile Versatile Frame- The Goliaths, Titans, Destroyers, Juggernauts]

The UCAF developed the suits initially for the creation of the Spartan Alpha project but scrapped the use of the suits due to costly design and resource requirements and the dangers involved with creating early MKI suits which required a fusion reactor in range. The UCAF scrapped the MKI project and focused in creating a better designed suit for Spartan Alpha.

The MKI was left in the darkness as the rise of the MKII and the MKIII came into existence, MKII was a powered armour that possessed a heavy lifter design and had a portable battery pack that could last a month, but the ungainly weight of the battery for the suit made it impossible to be used in actual warfare and was scrapped for industrial use only.

MKIII improved greatly in the design of the durability and weight as well as agility and versatility, thus naming it the Versatile Frame, but it wasn't actually commissioned for use as the suit was not completed when first previewed by the UCAF, it was left on hold until 3 years later at the start of the covenant/human war began.

The MKIII was put into the front line at the first major battle of

Haven's Gate, and the subsequent evacuation of Research Outpost Viticus. The MKIII had over a dozen upgrades since its launch into the war, and it included advanced reflex programming and agility, as well as space flight capability and various other classes of development. The suit became popularly known as the Juggernaut or MVF, as it spearheaded all major operations during campaigns.

The MVFs specifics vary between each given legion of military branches, but the average designs are:

Accommodations: 1 pilot only

Unit Type: Mechanised Mobile Assault Frame

Weight: 3.4 tons

Dimensions: Overall height 4.2m Width 3.6m

Power Source: ultra-compact multi-fusion drive

Constructed materials: Titanium, Arethium, Tungsten, 9 other metal compositions and optional ceramic ablative plating

Propulsion: 5-9 ion projection jets

Equipment: Universal Neural Interface, Panoramic HUD, 32x Optical zoom, 2 LIDAR Screens, 4 guidance lasers

Fixed Armaments: N/A

Operational Hand Armaments: N/A

[END TRANSCRIPT]

Behind these suits over a dozen other vehicles followed up, 4 Bulldog HRVs, 4 LRV Warthogs, 2 Elephant M318s Heavy Support and Supply Transports, 4 Armadillo ATV-30 APCs, 1 Wolverine MAAT, 1 Death Adder AT-TH, and finally bringing up the rear were 2 M855 Grizzly Berserkers, the sight would have made a grunt practically soil itself from the fear of facing the UCAFs death bringers.

The suits split up covering the walker and laying down fire on it as it attempted to turn to face the technical force, meanwhile the Grizzly's got to bear their massive barrellled guns and bring out the fury of the marines on it, the large 280mm guns fired in simultaneous fashion along with the other armoured vehicles, they laid out the fire cleanly at the walker.

The scarab was painted in a plethora of light as missiles and cannon fire slammed into it from all angles, the scarab staggered for a moment before it readjusted itself, the next wave of shots came from the missiles fired from the MAAT and then the 4 suits, the scarab tried to bring its main plasma cannons onto the walkers as they flanked.

The commander came over the coms.

>"Okay boys, we're wrapping this bastard up quickly, you two get it from its sides, I'll take the core, Jose take the suit from the front, don't let the main guns get you painted or you'll be getting sent home in a junk pile."<p>

The others acknowledged and they followed their given orders, splitting up the heavy armoured suit brought its gun to bear on the right side of the machine firing another heavy shell into the armour while the other suit let loose a wave of missiles on the other side keeping the top turret from striking at the commander and the other unit.

The commander rushed to the rear of the scarab he managed avoid being hit by the other suits stream of fire while he locked in his bayonet explosives, he landed behind where grunts attempted to bring plasma turrets and small arms fire onto his suit. With one mighty strike he slammed the black explosive casing into the back of the scarab.

"Clearing now." He informed his team as he retreated a safe distance.

The commander struck the detonator and let the explosives loose; the scarab's rear went up in a blast of heat and fire, the gunners in the rear had no chance to escape the blast and were deftly incinerated by the blast, other members of the scarab crew then heard the alarms as the shields on the rear reactor had been breached.

The commander of the team watched as the dust cleared, the walker was now at a dead slow pace, and most likely from the power loss and damage it had suffered. Well the commander of the MVF team was happy to put the walker out of its misery; he loaded a single explosive shell into his assault rifle and aimed it high.

The smoke cleared and soon the reactor became visible amongst the smoking metal work of the scarab's interior, the commander didn't waste time and fired the shot, the sharp blast from the underslung launcher let loose a single HEAT-85mm guided short range missile. The missile streaked to the helpless scarab and impacted exactly in the core, the combined explosion sent the walker upwards in blast of brilliant blue and orange, red coloured the tips as the fire shot up.

"There goes another." One of the pilots stated aptly as he cracked his neck.

"Okay boys get back to crowd control, mop up any stragglers and cover the others, we're going into town." The commander ordered.

A chorus of replies and they were on their way ahead into the smoking ruins of the town in the desert.

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Appleloosa

10:35PM

The falcons were delayed slightly from lack of visual on the target zone as smoke had covered their landing vector but they had arrived, a whole unit of relief troopers with ammo, and additional help, including a fellow helldiver, James. James had decided to take the second flight in but had to change his rifles for something more suited for desert combat.

He had now his Glaive out again, but with additional attachments such as a desert heat exchange chamber, it would help with cool down time when it got hot and when he needed to remain invisible it would mask his position if he didn't use any tracers. He of course hadn't forgotten to have his suit's camouflage changed, the now khaki and dark brown coloured skin made it suited for combat in the desert along with all of the additional attachments.

As he sat he noted the other members of the UCAF strike team carefully monitoring the ground below as they made their approach, they hadn't seen any further action as of 10 minutes prior when the skies were occasionally lit by plasma shots or a small fuel rod gun. But now it seemed dead silent, they feared the worst but from the scattered transmissions from the area, it seemed that the marines had held out.

They eagerly prepared for any further attack, but it seemed unlikely to happen now. They made their descent in the middle of town where a blue flare had been lit for the team, as they landed they found a damn sight for sore eyes, 4 suits and what seemed like an entire technical unit had been sitting around in the centre of town amidst the smoke and ruins.

As they disembarked they found all of the towns people cheering in laughter and happiness at their victory against the covenant, it seemed that the battle was over by the time they arrived. James disembarked to find that the technical unit had the markings of the 221st the very unit that was on the ship, he was somewhat surprised of this sudden appearance by the 221st in aiding against the covenant. It was a welcome surprise though.

He was greeted by one officer he noted as a petty officer first class.

>"Sir, PO1, Elson Butch, UCAF Naval Technical Division 1233, current team CO of 12th squad- Aurelia." The petty officer saluted professionally, James had a feeling this was a man of directness, no sense of politics of flirting he was an outright soldier.<p>

"At ease officer, I'm not here as current commander; you'll have to bring that up with Colonel Jackson." James replied neutrally.

He nodded and relaxed a little, he then began.

>"Helldiver, my unit arrived roughly 15 minutes ago and intervened, we helped in the survival of your members, but we're still confused as to our whereabouts, what's the current objective?"<p>

"Nothing at the moment, aside from probably getting your unit back to the command tent in Ponyville to aid in our current struggle against the covenant, you done damn well in getting the marines out of that tight spot. Are there any other units alongside yours that you saw on your way down?" James asked.

"Now that you mention itâ€¦ No we didn't see anyone else on our way down. Our screens were burning hot as we got down so any chance of sighting any friendlies was nearly impossible from our positions aside from my fellow officer here and his technical support." He motioned to the man standing not very far away with his fellow drivers.

"Very well." He looked about.
>"Where's Major Miguel?" He asked.<p>

The petty officer stated uncertainly.
>"Major Miguel suffered moderate wounds, he's currently recovering in our medical APC, along with a few of the other wounded, they're doing well considering they had suffered only 3 casualties and 5 wounded." He explained.<p>

"Have the major sent aboard the first falcon for treatment, and prepare to get your team to Ponyville soon, I'll have the replacements secure the area for the moment, also before we leave we need to get these locals back to Ponyville for an emergency meeting, do you know where the nearest local officer is?" He asked.

"You mean the one named Rainbow Dash? She's over by the second transport getting her armour checked on, she suffered a minor burn during the attack, as for other locals, there's a guy named Braeburn running about with his local band of militia, they're hold up by the medical transport getting wounded checked." Elson replied.

The helldiver saluted and headed on while the petty officer got the men prepared to move ASAP, James didn't take long to find the mare in charge, Rainbow Dash was still rather standing out even in armour, she sat on a bench near the UCAF APC, her bandages were obvious, she noticed James as he approached.

"Hey there lieutenant, sorry can't salute." She directed her head to her rather bandaged wing.

"That's fine Rainbow I'm not here for anything aside from talking to you, I need to know what happened to the other officers." He explained.

She looked at him with a rather uncomfortable look.
>"Look, James, we suffered a couple of casualties during our first engagement, and then we took further wounded when the scarab attacked, from what I can tell, Miguel's not the only one who's been in critical, we lost Spitfire to a glancing strike, and Soarin's wounded with burns on his leg and a broken shoulder blade. As for the guard, Steel was killed."<p>

The news was bad; they had already lost an officer?
>"What happened?"<p>

"Glancing strike hit the building she was in, vaporised, we don't know anything aside from what's left of the place, she's gone." Rainbow said with closed eyes.

He knew the feeling when good officers get killed.
>"It'll pass Rainbow, let it pass, Steel knew what she was getting into, you do as well, you and whatever remains of the pegasi force here are getting a trip back, we need to reorganise, and this time we're going to need everyone. Including you." He said reassuringly.<p>

She looked at him sort of surprised.
>"Why me?"<p>

"You're the best flier in Equestria aren't you?" He asked.

She felt a burning sensation and replied confidently.
>"Damn straight I am." She replied with a renewed flame.<p>

He knew she was flying low at the moment, but once she gets her head in place he was sure she'd manage herself. And now he had to get this fellow named Braeburn.

>"Rainbow, do you know where I can find a pony named Braeburn?" He asked.<p>

RD replied.

>"Oh him, he's located around the other side of the burnt salt tavern, he and a few colts went around making sure to locate any remaining survivors and he said that he and his fellow at least wanted something to get for his militia to get them on their feet again."<p>

He departed and headed to the ruins of what had a sign of a block of salt. He heard the rustling of wood and dirt as he approached. He could see a few males running about stacking bottles into crates and labelling them, there were a couple of crates fully packed and the last one being filled at the moment.

He greeted the nearest pony.

>"Hey do you know where I can find a colt named Braeburn?"<p>

The colt looked about and then shouted.

>"Hey Brae, we've got a fellow here who needs to see yah!"<p>

The sounds of cracking glass and wood and soon a yellow colt appeared rather miffed as he dusted away the splinters and sand off of his body he approached with three bottles of what looked like liquor and gave them to his fellow to stack and then greeted James.

>"I'm Braeburn, what do you need me for?"<p>

"I'm here from Ponyville, the UCAF command there had set up a base and have heard of the situation here, we were a little slow in arriving, but we got here now, and at the moment it seems that the command has decided that you and your fellow militia have proven themselves worth your weight, we'd like you to join us at Ponyville to help in organising a defence against the covenant." James explained.

Brae was surprised.

>"The princess agreed to this?"<p>

"Yes, she agreed joint military forces would help in repelling the covenant that includes you as well, she wants anyone who's gained combat experience to help in fighting against the covenant, and seeing how well you've managed, it seems you're on the list." He stated.

He milled it over and then looked around him, the smoking ruins of the town; he then looked to those around him who had fought. He then faced back to James.

>"Count us in." He said adamantly.<p>

"Good, you can join the APCs on their return back to the base, take only what you need as well, and whoever you'll need." James advised.

The yellow skin colt nodded and shouted orders to his fellow militiamen to gather whoever else had survived the battle, the bustling of militia and locals soon hushed as James headed over to the medical APC, he needed to check on the major. It would be of concern to Twilight of course having to hear of his condition late, especially when he was nearby from James.

He entered to see ponies and humans being treated and with 2 members of Miguel's team monitoring him with their gear.

>"How's the major?" He asked.<p>

"He's doing well, the blood loss and broken bones haven't dulled his ability to survive that's for sure, he's going to live, but it might take a while to regenerate the tissue in his rib cage, and then there's the matter of his bones, it won't take more than a week." The medic explained.

"Good." James replied before he exited the APC.

Gathering all the info he needed the helldiver called over his com line.

>"Command, this is task force delta we've relieved the survivors we have wounded inbound and KIA, please prepare additional funeral pyres, also all militia have been gathered and prepared to move. Additional forces have been located as well; Colonel Jackson should be expecting their arrival in the next hour or so." James explained.<p>

"Acknowledged delta we'll prepare for their arrival." The reply came over the channel.

XXXXXX

Ponyville

7:22AM

Miguel felt the world come back to him, his head was fuzzy alright, last thing he remembered was the battle at the town, and then he blacked out from the injuries he had taken; he definitely heard the alarms of his suit telling him he had blood loss and then he went out. But he also remembered the arrival of the armoured unit, the technical unit was a welcome sight if only he had been awake long enough to celebrate it.

He opened his eyes to find the room stark white, which meant he was in another hospital. That was twice in a week a new record by his standards; he rolled his head around to find that Twilight was seated nearby asleep with her head on a desk. He smiled inwardly and then pushed himself into a seated position to see where he was. By the looks of the room and smell he guessed he was at a normal hospital, and also because the old fashioned monitor sitting next to his bed.

He looked over to Twilight and decided to wake her.

>"Twilight, wake up."<p>

The purple mare woke suddenly realising that Miguel had finally recovered from his concussion. She exclaimed happily.

>"Miguel, I thought you'd never wake."<p>

She went over to hug him, and he looked at her in mild amusement of his standing with women, he never really did understand them, probably because of his past. But from the hug he received and her relieved tone, she sounded rather happy to have him with her.

>"How long was I out?" He asked.<p>

Twilight broke her hug and then looked at him with mocking annoyance.

>"The first thing you ask is how long you've been out?"<p>

"Most of the time yes." He replied.

She rolled her eyes and then stated.

>"It's about 6 or so hours since you've been admitted here in Ponyville general, your new friends had transports and had taken all the wounded on them to your base here, from what I can tell you're not the only one in the hospital."<p>

"All I needed was the time, but thanks for the update; I need to get into armour." He looked around for his uniform.

"Oh no you don't." She sternly said as she blocked him from getting up.

"What?" He perplexed.

"You just got here, and your medic stated, you'd be in hospital for a week until your bones get knitted back together, and no more combat, training, running off into the wilderness till you've recovered." She explained.

He felt that he could probably toss her into the bed and then tie her down, but decided against it, he knew that Twilight cared for him, even if she had her hysterical moments. And from what he could tell she meant it when she said he wasn't going anywhere.

>"Twilight, who gave the order?" He asked.<p>

"Medical officer Morris." She replied.

"As in the medical corporal or lieutenant?" He asked.

"It was a corporal." She replied.

"Then I can override the order." He stated as he attempted to push Twilight out of the way.

"Oh come on!" She huffed at her luck.

She pushed back down on him without much success and grunted out.

>"Just wait a couple of days at least Miguel it's not like your troops are going to die without you." She complained.<p>

"Yes they are, and you know as well as I do, Helldiver's don't have down time till everything in range of us is dead." He said nonchalantly as he got up.

She comically pushed against him and exclaimed.

>"But what about just taking things easy? Please!"<p>

He looked at her as she smiled with those puppy dog eyes; it was funny if not disturbingly cute to him, as he remembered his past life. He finally sighed out a response.

>"Fine."<p>

She smiled as she hugged him as he face palmed.

XXXXXX

In Ponyville the daily hustle and bustle hadn't changed, at least not in the sense that the new arrivals had made much of a racket, Ponyville had stranger events take place, including that molestation incident about some months prior, which no one wanted to talk about ever again. But at least the humans were quite welcoming to everyone.

The children pestered the marines occasionally about what life was like being soldiers, and then there were various colts going about wanting to sign up for the military as soon as Celestia announced the arrival of the UCAF and UNSC, which meant that there was going to be a very large influx of recruits.

Colonel Jackson had gone to meet with Petty Officer Belsen and the technical officer about their situation, and then there were the large suits alongside the other two, the other MVF and then the helldiver hardsuit exo-skeleton that were all parked in the edge of town. The UCAF was busy getting their things prepared by knocking down the trees around Everfree Forest.

Celestia had granted permission for a base in the forest away from the town, it had gone rather smoothly aside from the occasional timber wolves and cockatrice which attempted to attack the alliance members. The wildlife had certainly been shaken by the arrival of the UCAF that was for sure, the UNSC was still orbiting Ponyville with their carrier.

Captain Cutter had been granted permission to also build a ground base to get troops on the ground for further operations; the base was right next to the UCAFs in the forest, they had almost completed theirs while the UCAF set up a rather different base. They used a variety of vehicles in a combat fashion in defensive lines to protect the inner sanctum of the base.

In town the UCAF set up medical and communications between them and Canterlot, it was easier in town due to the closeness it made it better than having to travel into Everfree to contact the UCAF, and the UNSC had added their own post in town to help recruitment processes. The whole thing had been set up in the past 6 hours with personnel working round the clock.

Now that they had successfully completed their set up the local news channels opened up with Celestia addressing all of Equestria.

>"My little ponies, it pains me to say this, but as of today our homeland of Equestria is in a state of war, from a threat that has revealed itself non-terrestrial." She began.<p>

The murmur of concern and discussion was cut as she continued.

>"An alien threat has arrived in force in the regions surrounding

Equestria's borders west of Ponyville and has begun to attack the surrounding regions. The first engagement ended last night during a surprise attack on Appleloosa south of the town. Nearby settlements have been evacuated and preparations have been made to ensure security to the rest of Equestria. I urge you that this conflict involves us as well others, I have with good will allowed for another force to aid us in this time of need, a race called humans have joined to assist in removal of the alien threat, and they are willing to help. But they do lack numbers to completely help, I have decided that Equestria is to undergo a change that I hoped to never have seen in a thousand years, but Equestria is to go to war."<p>

A mixed chorus of concern and doubt amongst the audience and they hushed as Celestia once more explained.
>"I call to all members of Equestria to help in the kingdom's plight and any citizens physically and mentally capable please help to defend the country against the threat of this hostile species from destroying our homes and the lives of the kingdom."<p>

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The announcement continued for a few minutes with questions which Celestia handled well, meanwhile in Ponyville the UCAF and UNSC were planning on how to deal with the threat of the covenant. In the command tent nearby from town hall Colonel Jackson had met with Captain Cutter and the Spartans along with the UCAFs own officers.

"So with this race of beings, do you think we'll have the chance to win?" Anders asked.

"Possibly, it's not going to be easy, we're talking about a zealot commander and one with tenacity and insanity matching his temper." Jackson replied.

"Agreed, the colonel is right, Vesdarea is ruthless to the extremes even for a zealot officer, he disregards the safety of his own troops to gain victory and has little love for those under his command, he dictates command by fear and bloodshed." Zaro expressed with spite.

"Not the elite way? I thought that was how you all acted." Anders insinuated.

Zaro glared at the woman.

>"My kin have a history of war, but we never spit on the ability of our subordinates nor do we spit of the ability of those around us, we respect those who know how to command, we must control our emotions against temperament, we are honourable warrior's not mass murders." He stated annoyed.<p>

"Not from what you've done." One UNSC officer cut in.

"Damn it, this is getting us nowhere!" Jackson slammed his hand into the holo-table.

"My apologies, but we don't have a very good track record when it comes to former enemies." Cutter stated.

"Understandable, however Zaro's presence here is professional; he's

the only one who's willing to aid us against the current covenant, and he knows who we are currently up against, it's better to know what sort of threat we're facing than have nothing." Jackson stated clearly.

"So then what are we planning on doing about the covenant corvette?" He asked.

"We know about the corvettes, but that hasn't been decided, the numbers aren't determined yet." Jackson replied.

"We heard the contact reports of just one deploying a scarab, light model, but even so, doesn't it seem rather odd that a corvette would even have a scarab on it?" Anders asked.

"Most likely there's a base close by or, the ship was already in transit with the scarab, either way, that means that Vesdarea has a ground base nearby, or something similar, I don't think any other corvette would magically appear with a walker attached to its underside and coincidentally drop it right when we won the battle." Jace stated.

"Agreed, Vesdarea had a whole fleet at his disposal; even with the cascade we might be facing a large number of hostile vessels, or a few, either way this does not bode well for a direct offensive strategy going in blind." Zaro advised.

"What could the possibilities be that Vesdarea has a number of ships at his disposal?" Serina appeared and asked.

"Anywhere in between 3 or possibly 4 ships, it's likely he has the corvettes in a defensive formation around a single point to defend against attack, and the ships themselves could provide support for ground troops or even garrisons. I wouldn't be so sure, but it's the most basic defensive strategy that the instructors train us with when we begin, the rest of the time we spend time learning already known strategies and try and improve upon them, Vesdarea is predictable so it wouldn't be surprising to see him use the same strategy." Zaro replied thoughtfully.

"So our enemy could be already getting entrenched somewhere he could defend? But we wouldn't be able to confirm until we attack or recon the area?" Anders summarised.

"Pretty much, but still it isn't easy hiding tens of thousands of troops anywhere without making it obvious, so it wouldn't be too hard to notice a garrison of troops out in the wilderness, we're going to have to deploy a lot of recon forces to search through the bush roughly west of our position we spotted the corvette making its escape through that region so it would be the first place to look. The next best place would be to spot any jamming signals, once we have them isolated we would be able to determine a garrison, the covenant use this method to hide numbers." James stated.

"I guess we'll have to start now, how are you doing for your equipment?" Jackson asked Cutter.

"We're doing well on ammunitions, not so well on flight capable vehicles, pelicans, short sword bombers and hornets seem to be a premium at the moment." Cutter explained.

>"And then there's the matter of the UCAF weaponry that you promised to share with us."<p>

"I know what I said captain, we'll have to grant you access to our ammo types and variants, but no promises on anything advanced more than necessary." Jackson stated.

"What about your rail weaponry?" Anders asked.

"Our mass drivers? Those wouldn't be easy to produce even with your equipment magnetic drivers would have to have a lot of advanced materials we can't afford to spare at the moment, if you need them you'll have to wait until we can find large scale production facilities or materials to help." He replied.

"As for deployment, who plans to go first?" Belsen asked.

"I got first on recon." James said immediately.

Jackson threw the helldiver a look and stated.

>"James wants to deploy with his troops into the wilderness, it's their home, James will deal with first deployment in scouting the possible locations of the covenant, as for your own troops captain I won't force command, but I would advise you getting your men acquainted with different weapons, we'll help in any way we can."<p>

"Very well, this meeting is adjourned." Cutter concluded.

They departed from the command APC and went about to their respective posts, Cutter was a man of reason and skill, he was a tact thinker and careful planner, Jackson was a methodical man very forward and capable, he puts faith in his soldiers and sees his operations through to the end. He ensures that his men can do what they do, and provides as much support. They both had their own plans to deal with Vesdarea.

As they left the citizens of Ponyville watched curiously as the officers went about organising themselves, nearby the recruitment program went well, colts joining up with the intent to defend Equestria, and the refugees from Appleloosa who were busy getting themselves resettled here in town.

Braeburn and his fellow frontier militia went about getting themselves acquainted with the volunteer ponies that had helped them win the battle at Appleloosa; it was an interesting scene, having so many armed ponies in one spot. The pegasi task force had gotten themselves some R&R while they waited for reinforcements.

More and more ponies were slowly joining the effort to fight for Equestria, and the regular military had pitched in with recruitment programs going further than the crystal kingdom. News had spread about recruitment programs, and the crystal ponies were busy joining the effort pledging whatever support against the covenant.

Gilda and the griffons had headed back to get help as well and spread news about the war, it was soon to become a conflict of all sort of factions in reach. Meanwhile the personnel present in Ponyville took a short breather to get organised once more and prepare to move against the covenant, recon forces were being set up as per the

planned scouting mission to locate the covenant stronghold.

Elsewhere interesting things were happening. At Carousel Boutique, the marines who had volunteered had to pose for Rarity, she had taken to the organisation method of the UCAF personnel into account and believed that her new formal wear for the human soldiers would best suit them, even if a few of them didn't think it was all that great.

The Apple family were busy preparing for the immediate war by stocking up on supplies, AJ had gone into town to purchase as many storage crates and barrels she could take back, she had planned for the coming conflict intent on providing support with whatever she could provide. She had also received news from her family around Equestria that members were planning to join up in the war.

Big Mac was busy deciding whether or not to join, and ponies from further outlying towns were coming into Ponyville to sign up. Some members of Ponyville had already signed themselves up for active duty and were getting ready to be sent over to train; the UNSC had the best facilities so they'd begin training over with the marines. To who would oversee command of these new units was still being decided though.

Fluttershy was helping in relief of the nurses and doctors at Ponyville general; the UCAF had lent a few of their medics along with the UNSC to help tend to the wounded from the first engagement at Appleloosa. The number of nurses provided was sufficient, but the sheer scale of injuries was new to the doctors there.

Around town the young children heard of the coming conflict rather excited to the thoughts of what bravado and heroism would be displayed, all the children were happily oblivious to the dangers present, but for some people it was better they not know of the horrors of what was coming.

Amidst the air of war there was calm, a brief calm. In that time, Pinkie Pie went about laughing it up with members of the UCAF, she had a vast array of food she wanted to try out and dragged a nearby chef to help her with cooking, as for her, she was rather swell considering everything that was going to happen would be brutal on the people of Equestria.

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Vesdarea, sat upon his sole throne and watched as the lights on the holographic display told of another failure of his commander, the fool had paid with his life in that regard, but the commander refused to recall not until he managed to succeed in battle, Vesdarea knew that the officer in question feared the judgement of the zealot master and he had every reason to.

Vesdarea however thought of it as merely trivial, the foolish commander's life was over, as was any who failed to prove themselves worthy in his eyes. He sighed sitting on his throne thinking of the coming battles, the campaign on this world were to be bloody alright and it was going to be a gruelling uphill war or a storm, he didn't care, he lived for war.

But in the back of his mind he knew that she still lingered.

>"Oh please, your over dramatic view of this is pitiful, you think too narrowly and I know narrow when I see narrow."

"Shut up wretch, I never intended for you to know what a true warrior feels like." He retorted.

"**But I do, and what you do isn't really warrior like, you do this to make yourself feel better, the feeling of war is just a thrill for you, as for me, its worthless I need power and I need control, what better way than to usurp control? Bah, males like you never could understand women." Nightmare huffed. **

"That's true; I never could understand why my mother wanted me to become a commander of war, when I could have become a minister of faith through the sword, and now here I am, with my ambitions around me, a sword of the gods, determined to slay all those who oppose their will." He breathed in pride with his statement.

"**Your gods? What foolishness, such examples only reflects on what misbegotten society you come from, one determined to believe they're chosen beings in the universe infallible and righteous when they can justify war through any means, I just grasp for power and recognition, not some interpretation of myself." She miffed.
**

"Shut up I do not need any further aggravation today, my plans to eliminate the humans and these equines that you identified come first, and I will await for them to spring my trap, and then we shall see where power lies, it is the will of the prophets that this filth die." He growled.

Silence returned, Nightmare went off to do her own thing while the psychopath with an army sat back on his gilded throne in happy contempt of everything and everyone.

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Further awayâ€|

"Ma'am reports indicate that this was the last know position from the Iron Clad, we don't know anything else aside from that, the nearest star systems are this one and 4 others, 3 worlds hold possible signs of life, we should check the-." The AI was cut off as the female officer interjected.

"I know May, we're heading to the first world now, as I have already stated, this is the first foremost world we should check, next would be a few light years away which seems rather pointless considering we don't even have functional slip-space drives, and all navigation has been erased with damage to the forward databanks." The female commander summarised.

"Well then how else should I pass the time commander?" May asked.

"How about getting status reports on the situation with all available vehicles and fighters, it pays to be prepared for anything these

days." She replied.

"As you wish Commander Faust." May replied.

Faust looked onwards through the forward display of the world below, it was like earth, in the old stories of a nice blue world, and well this one was a mix of green and blue. She came from a colony in the union, the middle tier colonies were like this world ahead, just with more sprawling cities of white and silver and grey, it wasn't much to look at from afar, but up close the sheer scale was still pretty damn good.

Faust had been in transit since the incident in slip-space fried every ship in range, she managed to get her ship out of harm's way quick enough, but slip-space and navigation of the ship was crippled for good, it was lucky she managed to get so close to the planet, it was just a straight path to there now.

She had the odd feeling she was going to have to prepare, and thankfully May had returned with a complete recovery of all manifested reports over the ship.

>Total of:<p>

10 scorpions

10 grizzlies

30 warthog LRVs- all types

10 Bulldog HRVs- all types

15 Rhinos

5 Fox Artillery pieces

10 Cougar APCs

10 Armadillo APCs all variants

4 Falcon squadrons

6 Hornet squadrons

4 Wasp Interceptor Squadrons

2 Long Lance bomber/fighter squadrons

2 Short Lance VTOL fighter squadrons

2 Tarantula walker units

6 Wolverines

4 Raccoon bike squadrons

8 Mongoose squads

2 Warhawk Squadrons

Total Personnel count: 2200

Crew total: 400

The normal contingent of military personnel for a frontline Assault Frigate, the ship was made for carrying such a complement to and from the battlefield. Faust kept her crew well drilled in getting to their post and back, they all knew what she expected, nothing short of the best, besides it didn't mean they should get sloppy in war.

Her crew respected her and she respected them, almost all of them, funny thing about her ship was besides being well prepared and have a crew she trusted, they were all female, the UCAF didn't allow many mixed forces lest they be in the secondary defensive line or recovery, only a few female forces ever apply for frontline combat duties, and Faust certainly did.

That was also the reason she named hers the 'The Daring', she dared to challenge the covenant head to head in combat, and prove she could make it through any challenge they threw at her. Of course her superior didn't dismiss her skill at commanding, but they had yet to promote her, then again being stuck out of UCAF territory makes it hard to promote someone.

She wondered if she ever got that promotion to captain, but she knocked the thought aside, her main priority was to locate remaining UCAF forces and hopefully find a solution to return to human space intact and in the most diligent fashion, make it look awesome. And also possibly rack in a few more victories along the way, it never hurts to do well.

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AN: Hooray we're progressing further and further, I intend to take a break time now, and take the story for a bit of building rather than continued confrontation, we're getting close to another engagement anyway and besides our newest heroes have arrived.

Anyone want to add in any OCs? I'm open for that and beta-readers! I need people to proof flipping read this stuff and help!

Also the storyline has been slowing down because I might be running short on things to add. Also having Faust? Thought she was a good cameo for now, we've got a war to win anyway.

14. Chapter 14

CH14

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PART: I Daylight Reprieveâ€¦

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Ponyville

8:15 AM

Miguel had never been injured many times enough to land him in a

hospital, at least not a civilian one; he had been shot at swung at blown up more times than he could remember, and yet that wasn't even the half of it. Twilight from what he could tell when she interacted with his mind had actually experienced just one of the few things in his life that would have driven a normal human being insane, to which it did.

But from what he had learnt from Twilight, Celestia had cut away those memories to stop her from going mad, thankfully she succeeded and Twilight seemed oblivious to the seriousness of the memories she experienced, if she ever learnt of the terrible horrors he had suffered, he felt that she'd throw up.

There were only a handful of people who know of Miguel's past, and they're mostly dead now considering how many years that they themselves had fought in the war. Miguel knew that Twilight held a close relationship in the sense she cared for him, but she didn't understand to the greatest extent to what he had gone through.

She probably did know of his relation to the project but probably not how long he had been a part of it. He turned his mind away from his own ghosts and looked around; they had been wandering through Ponyville's streets for about the last 20 minutes, Twilight had been grasping Miguel's arm for the whole time dragging him in one direction or the other.

Ponies had taken to noticing the two of them; Miguel had known to ignore the looks as he had been given worse looks by the covenant, he was a helldiver of course. He had expected nothing less, he had hacked and slashed his enemies to shreds and the covenant learnt that the easy way, he suspected that there were a few that followed Zaro that held a deep fear of him and other helldivers.

Twilight continued holding him close as they strolled through the town, as they headed inwards to the market; there was a noticeable air of excitement from the populace, ponies pointing and shouting about the recent changes. There were groups of colts hurrying off to a UCAF and UNSC transport where they were busy getting recruits.

The recruitment site was a bit FUBAR; the marines had to deal with roughly a crowd of hundreds, at least half the population of Ponyville packed into such a sizable area, there was noise from everyone, the marines shouting out orders to get the people organised, mothers and sister, daughters and lovers all there to say goodbyes or inquire. The many colts in the area had bags, some bigger than their backs, it seemed many had come from further regions.

"Wow, how many arrived in the time that the announcement was made?" Twilight asked aloud.

Her question however was answered by a timid and familiar voice.

>"More than enough."<p>

They turned about to see a colt in full armour, his blue and navy mane brushed around to one side, his armour was plain silver and grey one shoulder had an icon of a shield and stars, he stood roughly 6ft tall. Twilight's face brightened up and she exclaimed excitedly.

>"Brother!"<p>

He opened his arms as she rushed over to him and hugged him, she stood away from hugging him and then she began.

>"I heard you were coming over, should have prepared."<p>

"I know you love to prepare for anything, sorry about not contacting you first. But Celestia said that you were at the hospital in Ponyville looking after your 'colt friend' who was hospitalized." He explained.

Twilight remembered Miguel and then motioned over to Miguel.

>"Miguel I' like you to meet my brother, Shining Armour."<p>

Miguel walked over and greeted him.

>"Good to meet you." He said neutrally.<p>

Shining raised an eyebrow.

>"So you're the human that Celestia had brought back? I heard about the small report the medical staff made back at Canterlot, when Twilight entered your mind. What the hay was that about?" He inquired.<p>

Twilight knew the protective side of her brother and tried to interject.

>"Shining, it was an accident; I never knew what exactly was in his mind, sort of my own mistake." She conceded.<p>

He looked at her and then back to Miguel.

>"Twilight I know I'm not dad, but still when I heard what happened I was worried. The report had me going back as soon as I could, Cadence agreed to comeback as soon as possible."<p>

"She means what she says; it was an accident, one that thankfully Celestia had managed to correct." Miguel stated.

Shining wasn't so sure about the human, he had been in many negotiations in his career, he heard about Miguel being an experienced warrior, one with a history that was even longer than his own. A seasoned warrior, engaged in a relationship with his sister? He wasn't sure about having such a person around Twilight.

"I know what she means, doesn't mean I have to completely agree with it, you're someone I will be keeping an eye out for." He stated directly.

"I understand, and I'll be sure to respect that." Miguel replied.

Twilight watched as Shining backed off and then asked her.

>"Twilight, how has things been?"<p>

"Busy." She admitted.

"I can relate, as I stated Cadence agreed to have us come back to Equestria, she's sent a message back to ensure that her council would be able to deal with the current crisis while she's here for a while longer. But I doubt she'll stay around any longer than she needs to.

Same with me, just with the royal guard being rearmed and prepared, I've received orders to come here to help train new recruits as soon as possible." He explained.

"Oh, how the recruitment going?" She inquired.

"At the moment? Nearly 3000 from outlying regions across Equestria, various ponies going into various sections of the military, we have a number of officers coming in from Canterlot, but many recruits are coming in from Trottingham and Neighton, and it's quite not there either, we still have many coming in from various other places." He replied.

"So it's going to get much a lot more crowded?" Miguel summarised.

"Pretty much, there are a lot of ponies being directed to Ponyville, it's the best place for your alliance to train them, and the best place to equip from what Celestia's been telling her generals." He said with a shrug.

"So what about you, aren't you joining?" Twilight asked.

"I am, however I've been reassigned as a special task force that Celestia gave to Luna, we're being reorganised from the Royal Guard into something that she calls, the Royal Equestrian Service, something about having a special task force capable of operating on high risk tasks. There was a plan made by Celestia some years ago during the mineral wars between the dragons and the griffons. She's decided to let Luna go through with organising it herself." Shining replied.

It made sense, having a special task force meant that they didn't need to send an army to do a single thing, or having to risk more lives in dangerous tasks where a small team of properly skilled officers or troops could accomplish. That didn't put Twilight's mind entirely at ease; she was concerned of course that her brother might get killed in the process of his missions, but if he was willing to carry it through she decided to support him.

"Hope that goes, well, but I'm kind of confused, how is Luna organising the whole task force?" Twilight inquired.

"I'm not really meant to say, she's taking them from the best skilled officers and troops out of the royal guard and our meagre military, it'll take a week or so to get us organised, but by then we'd be being sent out to test out scenarios that the UCAF had offered." Shining gestured to the UCAF recruitment site.

"From what I remember, those tests were for UCAF Helljumper, the ODS program training scenarios using holographic projected recreations of all likely combat scenarios and objectives and putting a team through their paces in failure or success missions. Smart, but difficult without a capable team, it's supposed to sort teams effectively." He recited from the training programme he had been given.

"That's what you say, I'm not sure, and this holographic training simulator sounds rather different from any normal training routine, even for the Night Guard they've never been trained in open situations of combat to be sorted." Shining expressed.

"It's meant to make a soldier think on his feet, failure of command as well becomes something that needs to be corrected in making a capable team, it works its way through the ranks of a team." Miguel explained.

"So I can imagine, well hopefully we'll have a capable task force of aiding in the war, I know I'll be busy." He sighed.

There was a shout over from a group, a crowd of Equestrian soldiers appeared, they seemed to be a mix of regular guards and some newer faces, but also some of the royal guards. Shining had to leave.

>"Looks like our first group's here, I need to get those soldiers sorted." He pardoned himself as he left.<p>

Twilight waved him goodbye as he went off to his duty. Miguel had a feeling that Shining was a warrior of honour and respect, but also someone, who hadn't seen as much conflict as he had; it was a sure thing that Shining was probably going to find the coming battles a challenge. Speaking of coming challenges, it seemed another had arisen.

A barmy group of stallions and mares had gathered into a large cluster there was raucous laughter and yelling, a few UNSC marines were watching at a distance along with UCAF, it seemed they were all cheering over an arm wrestle. Miguel and Twilight went over to see who was challenging who.

There was just a young looking marine, UCAF, or so his uniform said on a shoulder pad, he was small for someone who was a helldiver, but he was strong, he had brown hair and dark blue eyes. The other on the other hand was a stallion with a white coat, and a short buzz cut hair, he had red eyes and looked like a mix of a champion weight lifter and a steroid user.

"Come one Snowflake this guys a small fry!" One mare yelled.

"Jeez this kid's not breaking a sweat, how the hell's he doing that?" The UNSC marine asked to his friends.

The marine that he could identify was from Jace's unit, Jordan Hartman. Twilight asked.

>"Who's the kid going against Snowflake?"<p>

"That's not a kid, he's a helldiver, and he's a sergeant if I recall. He's supposed to be Jace's platoon chef." Miguel replied aptly.

Twilight was shocked.

>"He's the chef of a platoon, and he's that young?"<p>

"He's 17, and he's had a number of years probably going through military cooking schools, and those chefs have a very high record of explosives and precision for them." He replied.

"What, so he's the explosives expert and the chef?" Twilight perplexed.

"No, he's the tactical weapons expert, and he's the platoon's chef,

and it makes him a nifty marine especially in long term missions, but I doubt that he's a good engineer. Probably better and blowing things up than fixing them considering his training likely would have involved a lot of fire." Miguel explained.

"So why is he so strong?" Twilight asked.

"You might not know it, but helldivers themselves receive a special augmentation and training program of their own in the UCAF compared to the rest of the UCAF marine forces and regular military. It's not surprising that he's holding his own against the guy with the bigger arm, his bones and muscles are all bio-augmented." Miguel replied shrewdly.

It was just then that Snowflake was tiring out that the helldiver turned his arm in the other way that the muscular Pegasus was flung to the side of his chair unable to hold balance from the sudden assault of the helldiver who had been smiling the whole time. The Pegasus was dazed from the change and was towered over by the young helldiver that put his hand out to help him up.

>"You need to work on your posture aside from that, you did well." Jordan stated to the stallion still baffled at the immense strength of the teenager.<p>

A loud applause from the crowd and some mumbled sentence of annoyance about losing bets people went away from the arm wrestle and Miguel waited to meet the chef. Jordan was busy dusting his hat when he saw Miguel and saluted.

>"Sir, its bloody good to see you up and about."<p>

"It's good to meet you as well helldiver, how was the match?" Miguel asked.

"I've had better." He smirked as he flexed his bio-muscles.

It was odd to see how the bio-muscles of a helldiver looked, it wasn't like the normal human arm, the lines where certain veins pumping blue blood cells were next to green ones, the whole pigmentation of Jordan's body had green veins running through him, of course this wasn't as apparent in many helldivers, Miguel being one of the few special cases, but James being a fully grown helldiver. Bio-muscles tend to fuse into the body's deeper veins and arteries, at least when they're older.

"Sargent, what exactly is your current priority?" Miguel asked.

The marine put his hand on his chin and then recalled his primary duties.

>"I've got cooking to be done around in 30 minutes, gotta move all those potatoes from the Frevis stock and then, I've got another 2 hours being spent on roasting dinner up. Marines don't always like their food being materialised by the replicators. Oh, and some pink chick came around looking for human chefs, the requisitions officer looked like he was going to shoot himself when he came to see me about her. Don't exactly know how she could do that to one marine though, poor Jake." Jordan finished as he put his uniform webbing back on.<p>

Twilight rolled her eyes, and smiled at the thought of Pinkie driving the poor humans insane with the talk of food, parties, and fun.

Miguel seemed to have a ghost of a smile on his face also thinking of the same thing, he then saluted the marine before he headed back into the field kitchen.

>"So I guess that Pinkie's going to be adding her culinary skills to the galaxy?" Miguel asked humorously.<p>

Twilight shrugged.

>"She's Pinkie Pie."<p>

"That I am!" They heard as Pinkie suddenly popped above Miguel's shoulder with a big smile on her face.

"Heyya Twilight!" Pinkie smiled as she leapt off of Miguel's shoulder.

"EEK!" Twilight exclaimed and jumped away as Pinkie landed on her hands near her and smiled.

>"Humans are so great! They've got so much to show me and their kind of fun is amazing, it's different, like funny different, not ha ha funny, more like serious funny. But then again, being in so many conflicts tend to do that, but enough with that, they've got so many awesome chefs, one flipped me a pancake the size of a pizza and not those silly, Pizza Hut pizza mia pizzas, like those big ones, oven fired ones are the best, but so expensive!" Pinkie rambled on at least for another 10 seconds before Miguel grabbed her as she did a cartwheel.<p>

"Pinkie, don't you have an important appointment?" Miguel asked with a very strange smile. Miguel never smiles from Twilight recalled, unless it was something very special or sincere.

Pinkie replied.

>"Oh yeah, there was that awesome guy with the big stack of guns and explosives in his kitchen. But nah, I'm supposed to be here for at least the next sentence before the author writes how I'll be heading off and you two will be absolutely baffled at what I talk about." Pinkie finished.<p>

They were absolutely baffled and then realised what she had just said when she picked herself up and then jumped away, laughing out loud like a mad mare. Twilight got back to Miguel's side and then asked.

>"Will we ever understand what goes on inside her head?"<p>

Miguel replied.

>"I think it would scare even a Spartan."<p>

Twilight nodded and they headed onwards to their next destination, the boutique. As they went through the market, Twilight noticed the various stalls being packed by ponies from out of town getting something to eat or others just there to sell things, but there was an obvious gap, the apple family stall remained empty.

Twilight looked around for either Big Mac, or AJ, she didn't seem to be anywhere in sight, as they passed by the stall they only caught the distant shout of the orange mare. Miguel had better hearing and then said.

>"AJ's about 30 meters away behind that florist." He pointed over at a green painted house with straw roof.<p>

"I wonder what's going on." Twilight said intrigued to the orange mare's current exploits.

They headed over where they found that there was a very large group of ponies gathered at the back of the florist it seemed that there were various ponies, and also AJ who happened to be on what looked like a makeshift stage with a whole cluster of ponies who looked like they were having a debate.

"I say we name ourselves the first Appleloosan Rangers!" A yellow colt with Stetson demanded.

"Hey I don't see your name on this unit, since when did only you get to name whatever you want?" A black Pegasus responded angrily.

"You may have helped us in the battle of Appleloosa, but that doesn't mean that you can impose on our unit, it's only because we got crushed together that we have you in our unit." A colt with caramel coat and brown hair replied.

"Well that's the whole point of this meeting, we've got limited time and we need to figure out our unit organisation, and designation, trust me I've been around and I know the military, we need this by full consensus from everyone, not just you." The black Pegasus replied.

"How about having a tie breaker?" A familiar rainbow haired Pegasus asked.

RD landed at the side of the black Pegasus and then explained.
>"I was at that battle, and I've seen good ponies die, we both lost people at Appleloosa, and now isn't the time for argument, it isn't something we should be angry at each other about. We need to pull ourselves together in order to face these aliens head on."<p>

RD's enthusiasm and determination as well as her reasoning seemed to help make the group's mind, the apple family seemed to agree with AJ stepping in.

>"RD makes a really good point; we need to be together on this!"<p>

It seemed to make more confident.

>"Very well, I propose we have one unit, but separate different styles of training, I doubt that everyone can fly." The black colt offered.<p>

"What should we name ourselves?" One pony asked.

"I say we name ourselves the Equestrian Rangers." AJ proposed.

It made sense no past affiliations aside from the ranger part, and being Equestrians, there seemed to be a lot more agreement on the idea of having a unified force. They all agreed.

>"Then it is decided, we will be the first Equestrian Rangers Division."<p>

There was a small cheer, it wasn't all great in the sense that everything had been fixed, at least it was progressing for them, they still had to organise how their force would work, and it seemed that yellow pony was going to get his fair share of work. Miguel and

Twilight exited the rally and headed back into the streets of Ponyville it seemed there was quite a bit going on.

They headed onwards to the boutique undisturbed for the walk, at least until they arrived at Rarity's shop. At first it seemed normal, the model mannequins outside on their stands and the shop's luxurious decorations spiralling upwards, they found that the front seemed rather packed, a group of mares were busy looking in at the window.

"What the hay's going on?" Twilight muttered to herself.

"Excuse me ladies." Miguel interrupted.

The group of women jumped about to face him and they all grinned sheepishly.

>"Oh, hey thereâ€¦!"<p>

A blue and pink manned woman with cream skin nudged her lime coloured friend and they moved out of the way, even though the mare protested.

>"Oh come on I want to see the humans! I need to see the humansâ€¦!"<p>

The others looked at her and back to Miguel.

>"We'll be going now." One mare said for the whole group. They nodded and then bolted out of the way.<p>

"Let me guess, Rarity's dressing the marines?" Miguel recalled Twilight's memories.

"Oh boy." Twilight dreaded the moment they walked in.

The door to the shop opened and the bell rang, they came face to face with their unexpected fears, Rarity had been dressing them, but it wasn't as bad as Twilight's memories were like. But that didn't make the awkward pose any less awkward. Rarity had one of the helldivers in his bare overalls including his under-skin webbing. The toned marine had posing for Rarity as she made measurements over his body.

"Oh welcome Twilight and hello to you Mr Miguel." She smiled as she rubbed her hand down the length of the back of the marine who shook.

"Oh sorry darling, I tend to do that." She apologised to the marine as she turned to face Twilight and Miguel.

"So this is what every mare's been peeping at?" Twilight asked with a smirk.

"Well-. What?" Rarity exclaimed.

"There was a rather large group of mares peering inside Rarity." Twilight gestured to the windows.

Rarity felt a little embarrassed and smiled.

>"Well thankfully there wasn't anything to exposing." She mumbled the last bit.<p>

"So what exactly are you trying to accomplish here? Aside from getting a very good view of my marine's exteriors." Miguel asked.

Rarity gasped.

>"I would neverâ€¦" She objected.<p>

"Rarity I think Miguel was just joking." Twilight interjected.

"Ohâ€¦" She said somewhat deflated.

"Well what exactly are you doing with all these members of the UCAF?" Twilight asked gesturing to the 4 or 5 other marines sitting about, with one who waved back at Miguel.

"Well if you must know, I had a lot of brilliant ideas, including these new materials that they use in their suits and overalls and attire make my ideas flow, these suits are so dull and I wanted to spruce it up a bit, so I asked for some volunteers. Amazing that these boys agreed." She said thoughtfully.

"Well that's good and all, but doesn't this seem I don't know, a little redundant, I mean I don't think the UCAF would wish to mass produce your uniform in such a time, I mean it's good and all, but I don't see it happening very soon." Twilight stated.

"I know where you're coming from Twilight, and I do admit that in my opinion this was seemingly selfish, but I came up with a better idea, the uniforms that they use would also work for us as well, a uniform army is an efficient army. So I'm using their current overalls as templates for us, I wanted to give my idea a go ahead with princess Luna before the week was out. Which is why I'm somewhat ranting." She finished.

"I guess it makes sense, so how are the uniforms coming along then?" She asked.

"Fine, if only I could replicate the soft gel layer armour they use in their overalls it would be perfect to mass produce and look stylish, of course the marines don't tend to pay much attention to details on uniform and have directed me to ask the Requisitions officer about getting in a full sample of the gel." Rarity explained.

"So let me guess, you want me to requisition a small supply of translucent poly-fibre dextro-carbon gel, so you could experiment with it?" Miguel asked.

"Well if it's not too much trouble it would be appreciated." Rarity smiled sweetly.

"I'll be sure to note that down and ask the Rec officer about that." Miguel replied.

"Oh thank you dear, oh Twilight I almost forgot, Fluttershy wanted to speak to you about something important, she said she'd meet you at Ponyville, where the UCAF had set up a field clinic, she said something about helping, and I haven't had time to inquire as to what, but she says it's urgent." Rarity advised.

Twilight acknowledged.

>"Okay Rarity, come on Miguel, looks like your day just begun."<p>

XXXXXX

Inter-Systemâ€|

"Commander Faust, Eta arrival time, 38 hours and counting, should we try long range signal to contact any survivors?" May asked.

"No don't we know that anyone can pick those signals up and the last thing I intend to do is allow the covenant to know were here, keep and maintain silence for now, when we are sure that there's a beacon direct a signal then." She ordered.

"As you wish commander, shall I begin waking the crew? It's been about a week, I'm sure that they'll need time to readjust from stasis." May stated.

"Very well, permission granted. But I want everyone up." She specified.

"You mean them?" May, raised a holographic eyebrow.

"All of them."

"Beginning defrost."

XXXXXX

END PART: I

Sorry guys I ran out of time, I've been awake since last night, so around 38 hours straight I am really not doing well, ended up revising twice to make this readable, damn it I need sleep. So see you guys tomorrow and please send in your OCs, and any suggestions, critiques are welcome and such, I don't have any images to add to this sadly.

Oh to anyone only reading on there's images provided in yeah there's visual aids, and I can provide them here, and later on my account please check with me there if you have any FAQs.

15. Chapter 15

CH15

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PART: II Night's Cold Embraceâ€|

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Ponyville

8:25 AM

Miguel and Twilight made their way through the crowded streets of Ponyville, it seemed like the crowds had grown as full as they could, but it was still a rough walk through to the other side of town, in the midst of all the confusion Miguel asked.

>"What do you think Fluttershy would volunteer for?"<p>

"Probably medical service, I wouldn't be too surprised about it though, she's always been helping others, but I don't know if this is good, she's never been good at helping with actual serious injuries." Twilight replied anxiously.

"Medical officers have been exposed through training sims they know about medical intensity as for your friend, she's inexperienced, they won't just throw her into a critical medical situation, that'd be against UCAF medical regulations, they need to train her first before allowing her to even touch a scalpel." He tried to reassure her.

Of course he did realise that the UCAF military didn't always function in such a fashion, if anything they'd have skipped all of the details and thrown a novice in holding a poor bastards organs together. Fluttershy being thrown into a medical situation wouldn't be a very pretty sight for her, especially seeing as she or any pony had been in a warzone, they never heard the screams of the dying.

As they reached the other side of town they found the medical module, it was a prefab building made of ceramic plating, titanium ablative iridium and made to withstand everything stronger than a small orbital strike. There were dozens of ponies gathered outside, Miguel could see less were as enthusiastic or experienced enough to join.

"Well at least she won't be alone." Twilight said.

"Probably, but that doesn't mean that the medical ward isn't something everyone would want to see." He replied.

The marines in the front greeted him.

>"Sir!"<p>

"At ease, I'm looking for a woman named Fluttershy." He inquired.

"Right, sir!" The marine began to flick through a holo-book.

The room was occupied by 6 marines, 4 medics and 2 doctors, they all seemed to be going through training or introductions for Equestrian volunteers, the eager looking participants were bustling about while the marine medics explained to them how human medicine advanced and changed from Equestria's form. It'd take a while, but they'd get a taste of UCAF medical officers in action once things got going.

They waited for a bit till a medical officer appeared with the butter coloured Pegasus. She looked somewhat different, as she had changed her clothes; she now wore an enclosed shirt which fit to her form, it took her form well, enough so that every male seemed to take a glance at her chest. Twilight seemed unimpressed by the attention.

Miguel just seemed to laugh inside his head; the marine medic in charge knew how to train a good nurse, but didn't know how to treat one. Fluttershy waved goodbye to the medic who went back to his

duties, the butter mare walked over to them with a small blush.

>"Oh hello Twilight." Fluttershy spoke softly.<p>

"Hey Fluttershy, Rarity asked us to see you, about you going into joining the UCAF medical corps." Twilight began aptly.

Fluttershy nodded. "I wanted to see if I could help, I know I'm no fighterâ€|" Twilight would have thought otherwise when Fluttershy took down a bear 5 times her size down with a number of precise strikes with her hands. "But I think I could do well as a medical officer, I care for the health of all things, big and small, I think this would be appropriate." Fluttershy explained.

Twilight looked over to Miguel who could see her uncertain look. Miguel thought it over as well, Fluttershy seemed like a very caring and timid woman, but she'd never experienced the war like he had or the others, she wasn't even there when the UCAF were clearing their wounded and dead away. Twilight said in response.

>"Fluttershy, I don't know, that's solely up to you. But are you sure about this? I mean you'll be faced against some very dangerous things, not to mention the lives of all these young men will rely upon you, do you think you could do it?" Twilight asked the butter Pegasus.<p>

Fluttershy stood there unsure of how to reply, she did think it over a bit before she replied with a firm stance. "Yes, I want to do this, those colts who go out and fight need someone to take care of them, I know I could do it." She replied firmly and confidently.

Twilight wasn't sure to be amazed at Fluttershy's willingness to throw herself into harm's way to help out, or the fact that she had seemingly grown confident in her actions. Miguel looked at Twilight and added. "Very well Fluttershy, if you believe you could do what's needed then do it, but please there can't be much for self-doubt when it comes to the work in the UCAF medical corps, you need to work fast and respond well to trauma. I do hope you can take care of yourself when the time comes." Miguel said mindful of the butter Pegasus's history with certain creatures, Twilight had shown him in her memories of how much she could do, facing down dragons and such.

Fluttershy showed a face of gratitude and calmness. "Thank you for your support." She smiled.

"We're friends Fluttershy, I'll be there when you need help, and Miguel will be there when you need protection." Twilight replied.

The reassured Pegasus headed off to the wards of the medical wing to get back with training, Twilight and Miguel exited the field hospital. Twilight sighed. "Do you think she'd be safe Miguel?" She asked him.

"Safe? No, but she'd be tentative in the field and definitely timid in her work, those being both positive traits to have in such stressful work." He replied as he thought over various combat situations he had seen medics like her, a fairly timid woman like herself would help a lot with morale as well as keeping herself from stressing in intense situations.

The two of them were heading off when they heard a commotion behind them. "Hey wait up for me!" They both turned to see Jace in bandages hobbling with a few medical patches over his body. He looked worse for wear but he was still alive that was for sure. "Jace how's the body?" Miguel asked.

"Hurts like a motherfucker, sir." He replied with a salute.

"Good to hear, we were on our way to the requisitions officer to ask Jake to give us a few litres of fibre form, we need it for Rarity's dress shop, something about making uniforms for the marines." Miguel explained.

"Really? I'd hate to be Jake right now." Jace said humoured.

"Of course you could save me and Twilight some time by going over there and passing off the request." Miguel stated offhandedly.

Jace gave him an unimpressed look and muttered. "I need to keep my mouth shut."

"Good, we'll meet back at the command tent at 1500 hours." He saluted the helldiver.

Jace nodded and headed off hobbling on his injuries, Twilight tilted her head. "You liked doing that didn't you?" She asked with a smirk.

"Maybe." He replied with the ghost of a smile before they headed on to the nearby staging ground where various officers and troops were gathering, it seemed it was also there that the Equestrian Rangers were also gathering. It was going to be an interesting sight watching all the new recruits joining the war effort.

As they approached they saw Rainbow Dash rallying the columns of recruits, earth ponies, pegasi, unicorns all gathered into 2 straight rows side by side, their multi-coloured bodies the only thing that made them look apart from UCAF military personnel or recruits. Nearby the two of them spotted Colonel Jackson and Captain Cutter talking on a stage nearby.

The crowd which had gathered dropped into silence as Jackson stood at the podium.

>"Greetings to all of you, and in all honesty I have no experience in speeches so I will make this short. You stand before me as volunteers for your people, representing those willing to sacrifice life and limb for the safety of your people, for those who stand beside you, you are all willing and capable to do what you need to, to ensure the safety and security for your people. I know that you haven't seen war, but be assured, you will be ready, that is all I can assure you." He finished.<p>

A small round of applause shortly followed, with an air of confidence, it was surely uncertain of how the UCAF was going to put these rookies into the field, but they needed to do it if they failed in removing the covenant. It was all they could really do, as the assembly finished the marines in charge with training appeared and began issuing the first orders of the day.

RD was amongst the group but she had to meet with an officer with a jetpack who was explaining a difference in training. The pegasi went off in their direction, the earth ponies to where they needed to go, and the unicorns had a rather light armoured officer with a calm air of sensibility around him.

Miguel identified him. "Anderson Trieu, he's from the UCAF eastern division, assigned to our unit to be the strategic operator, he's good at his job, but he rarely goes into direct combat." Miguel shrugged.

As they watched the young officer begin introductions they were greeted by AJ. "Hey there Twilight, and good to see you Mister Miguel." She smiled warmly.

"Please, I don't use my civilian name in public unless I'm off duty which hasn't happened in a long time. Just call me major for future reference." He said to her.

Twilight decided to ask. "How has the new Equestrian Rangers been?" She asked.

"A mite busy, Braeburn wants to make his new force a rough one at that, a lot of ponies from Appleloosa with him, he's also bringing some in from Ponyville and Hoofington, you know how they are." She shrugged.

"Good to see they have a leader; I'll be keeping an eye on how this Braeburn does leading this band of raw recruits." Miguel stated.

"Thank ya kindly Major, I really would hate to see anything happen to my cousin." She said gratefully.

"I keep my troops safe, and besides their lives are better spent living rather than wasted being lost, it's just how the UCAF does it." He said with a bit of a disheartened tone.

Twilight could see something was troubling him from his suddenly empty expression, she grasped his arm. "Miguel?" She asked.

Miguel said nothing and recomposed himself. "It's nothing, thanks for the update Miss Applejack."

"Just call me Applejack, no missus here." She said replied.

"Right, we must be getting on, I need to go to the command tent where the colonel and captain are organising this army. Good day." He said before going on with Twilight who still looked at him concernedly.

He said nothing while he thought to himself; it seemed as if he had dug up something from his past. Twilight decided to finally inquire. "Miguel, is something wrong?" She asked him.

He finally broke from his hollow gaze and looked over to her. "It's nothing, just a memory, an old one." He replied with a ghost of a smile.

They continued on the road to the command centre where the UNSC had

set up a forward base and barracks and such, the whole area was filled with troops, vehicles and various prefabs being constructed at the forest. The UCAF had practically demolished the front edge of the forest with the UNSC helping them; the whole area was now grey and green with hints of steel and silver everywhere.

They reached an asphalt strip where the marines were busy reconstructing warthogs and performing maintenance on their vehicles, they walked by the troops, a few threw looks at him and Twilight, a few mumbled on about Twilight but they were discouraged by Miguel. Miguel was a helldiver a 6'5ft killing machine with little history aside from the one he knew and those of his unit knew.

As they reached the command centre they were greeted by security, who directed them up to the main CIC, upon arriving they found the centre packed with personnel getting things in order, Anders was present overseeing the UCAFs arsenal from what a UCAF technician was explaining, and surprisingly Zaro was here as well.

The covenant elite spec ops commander with his second in command were both present getting unsavoury looks from the UNSC personnel and a few looks from Anders, the two of them remained rather passive amongst the whole rush of things. Captain Cutter and Colonel Jackson were both at the desk reviewing the reports from the drones that were deployed and flights of short swords sent to scan the area.

Jackson was analysing the data. "This area between the edges of the Evefree Forest seems like a perfect sector where they have a firebase, but our problem is they have jammers set up to emit EMP fields over the area we can't get a definitive confirmation and sending in a short sword or gunship seems out of the question if they have AA batteries set into place." He explained.

"True, it seems sending in a recon force will be our only way to confirming this, what teams do you have in place for this sort of mission?" Cutter asked.

"I have 4 squads, all helldiver teams, but I could have smaller 2 man hunter kill teams sent in to scout out the area." Jackson thoughtfully added.

"Having smaller teams would save us a lot of trouble having to avoid being noticed." Echo teams commander, Sargent Lazoroski said.

"If worse comes to worse we'll drop in supplies via short sword." Cutter suggested.

"So we split Echo and Midas squads and send them in by foot to scout out the region, it seems like a sound tactic, the only problem is if the covenant have a heavier presence in the region ahead of the deployment. But aside from that I don't think we'll get a better chance to locate the covenant command ship that Vesdaera is using." Jackson concluded.

Zaro decided to add something into the conversation. "There is also another way to finding the command ship Vesdaera is using." He offered.

Their eyes turned to the elite as he brought up maps of the covenant ships.

>"I have supporters still amongst Vesdarea's ranks, they believe his honour is meaningless and he's been driven insane by his hunt for me. These supporters would gladly turn their weapons on Vesdarea at a glance if given the chance, however Vesdarea has control over them by use of zealots he has watching over them, and various other units being mixed in. Because of this there's no definite means to contacting my supporters without arousing suspicion, but there is a means to helping them rebel." He pulled up a signal code and explained. "There's a special command line I have linked to each of my fellow warriors, it hasn't been used but it would work in our favour if we contacted them through it. Once we have assurances from them we can assume they'll help rebel against Vesdarea when we launch our attack on his command base, and also they'd inform us of what he may be planning." Zaro explained in detail.<p>

Jackson listened with scrutiny, he then stated. "It sounds feasible; the ability to have Vesdarea having to deal with the marines on the ground and his own forces mutinying would give us a window of opportunity to breach his base, also being able to disable his defences from the inside would grant us a chance to face this bastard down with no means of escape."

Cutter was more cynical of his observation. "That or they'd discover a leak in their troops and kill off your allies; we don't know who's loyal to Vesdarea or you." He said to Zaro clearly.

Zaro didn't take lightly to the condescending tone that Cutter had replied with but he added.

>"The only ones who I can trust are a few members of my previous command, they all trust me and despise Vesdarea, and it is only just me that they will answer to. We hold our honour when we make a sworn blood oath, they will not go against that honour even till our death."<p>

"Captain, I'm telling you, Zaro has no reason not to help us, and we have a shared goal here, the Equestrians need us and you need a place to recover and repair and we have the tools, and the means to getting us all back to human space once we've managed to get rid of Vesdarea's strike force." Jackson urged.

"And how are the Equestrians going to help? They've barely managed to start their way in to the 21st century level of technology." Anders said aptly.

A calm and yet regal voice interrupted. "We will help as intended humans."

They turned to see the princesses, princess Luna and Celestia had appeared, both of them in light armour that covered some parts of their body's with a skin tight suit underneath and various adorned jewels, some of which hovered in places. They had arrived with some of their guards, including Shining Armour and Cadence who was dressed in formal dignitary clothes.

Twilight looked over to her brother who gave her a curt nod as Celestia approached the tactical display desk where the Colonel and Captain were still muttering things between each other as the princesses approached. Zaro who saw Celestia kneeled down along with his second in command in seemingly zealous fashion.

"Rise sangheilli, you do not owe me or my sister such commitment." Celestia said to the elites.

Zaro did not rise, but Luna decided to take her voice in this and commanded. "***RISE**". In her royal Canterlot voice before Celestia could stop her. The deafening roar was loud enough that the tables shook and a few glass screens cracked and surely Serina popped in and commented.

>"How quaint, please remind me to bring out the ear corks the next time that happens or a giant sound proof chamber." She rubbed her holographic ears as she said that.<p>

Zaro and his subordinate were both on the ground recovering from the blast from Luna; they both rose and muttered something between a curse and a comment in their native language only Jackson and Miguel could understand. Celestia was face palming and Luna was smiling sheepishly.

>"We may have overdone it." She said it while grinning.<p>

"Please do not do that again." Jackson said while rubbing his ears.

As they got back on their feet Celestia recomposed herself and then began once more.

>"My people would like to help, this is their home."<p>

Cutter wasn't too sure how to approach this and replied.

"Understandable, however your military technology will not be effective, you managed to get by with the UCAF arming you, but even then the covenant will still have a large advantage here."

"But they don't have magic." She said with a small smile.

"Magic?" Cutter perplexed.

"My people are able to use magic, teleportation and various other ones including aging and duplication. If only for the most powerful unicorns in all of Equestria, we have an advantage that no others possess." She stated.

"That ridiculous magic doesn't exist." Anders replied cynically.

Cutter threw the doctor a look to not interject. Cutter asked.

>"What exactly could your people help us with, by using magic?"<p>

"We are able to heal injuries and able to perform complex tasks with our magical affinity, however it also depends on the user. Our magical abilities have a large overlapping area where we can use even the most basic spells even if they may not be our special talent. There are also a large number of unicorn guards able to use magical abilities in combat to help shield allies and such." She explained.

"It does seem sound, however we have personal shielding, and various armour plating to help in combat, not to mention the vast array of medical gear we have." Jackson stated.

"It sounds good that you want to offer help, but I don't think you're entirely ready for a head on fight with the covenant as is, our troops have only begun the early stages of training it may take weeks if not months for fully trained units to be prepared." Cutter punctuated with a sigh.

"Best you can do at the moment is to hold your own lines and tighten security around your population centres while we try and deal with this." Cutter finished.

Shining was going to step in but he was stopped. "The captain is right, we are not yet prepared for such a thing; however our people's aid is here if you require it captain Cutter. Luna and I will also aid when the time is required, at the moment we shall leave you to our defence and hope that time is on our side." She finished.

Cutter nodded. "Very well, back to the briefing, at our current status the forward bases between here and around parts close to Equestria's west coast should be secured soon enough, that should corner the covenant inside their little region. By then we expect a full drone squadron to be sweeping the region to inform us of any covenant hunter kill teams that might be sent forward." Cutter said whilst he motioned to each point on the map.

"Where do you think the helldivers will be needed?" Jackson asked.

"Your boys?" Cutter looked over to Miguel. "I don't know, but that's solely to you and your major, you could station yourselves here and have your falcon gunships take you to each location on the move." Cutter suggested.

"Keeping a constantly mobile strike force in the air does sound useful." Jackson added thoughtfully.

"We'll have 4 patrol cycles out to scan the area and wait deployment when they're needed." Miguel said.

"It's a reasonable tactic." Jackson agreed.

"Who's going to be on the roster for this?" Cutter asked.

"Echo and Midas, then we'll split off first platoon into halves and have them led by James, and Sargent Major Hartman." Jackson replied aptly.

But there was a problem Miguel was the commander of the platoon. "Sir?" He perplexed.

Jackson had no intentions to hide his matter on Miguel. "Soldier, you're in no position to fight, you know as well as I do the medical reports stated you needed 3 full days for a proper reconstruction from your injuries, you will not be joining the teams on their sweeps till then. I want you to remain here in Ponyville for the time being. Understood Major?" He asked directly with a cool and piercing stare.

Miguel knew that the colonel meant it, he knew it was an order he'd rather not have to be bound by, but he knew that the colonel wasn't going easy on him. "Yes sir." He replied calmly, inside his mind he

was annoyed but held it in. 'These bones, aren't made like the others.' His mind quipped. He felt a tug and he saw her looking at him concernedly, he gave her a reassuring look trying to tell her it was fine.

The colonel went back to addressing the captain. It was then heard something nearby and noticed it was Celestia and Luna whispering something between each other, but he couldn't hear either one of them, he guessed from Twilights history of magical abilities that they had created a bubble no one could hear into aside from them. He'd have to ask if there was a means of getting around the spell.

Then the doors opened to the CIC and the commanders of the squads appeared, Hartman was here as well but dressed in his cooking clothes and with Pinkie Pie hovering behind him sneakily. Twilight threw her a confused look but shrugged it off. The colonel began to address the arriving helldivers.

>"At the current time I want to make this clear, you're being deployed in a constant circulating formation; each one of you will be in command of a squad to sweep for covenant incursions. It's going to be a relatively level deployment; there is nothing that can be allowed to s-."<p>

"SURPRISE!" Pinkie Pie erupted from behind the sergeant and blew out from a party horn with sprayed the colonel with streamers and confetti.

About 3 Spartans walked into the room scanning for whatever was the threat and realising it was only Pinkie Pie. Miguel wasn't surprised mildly confused how Pinkie even managed to get past security behind the sergeant the whole time and why Celestia hadn't done anything to stop her, and also why there were 3 Spartans of the UNSC hiding right outside a door.

"False alarm." Jackson blew the confetti from his face and dusted the streamers off.

Pinkie blew a few more times from the horn and seemed to rather annoy the nearby personnel who were almost reaching for their guns. Jackson addressed the pink mare this time deciding to have a different intention behind just grilling her for playing that prank on him.

>"Considering everything, Hartman, take this pink pony with you and give her stored unit Mantis-MK: IV and arm it up and let her do what she wants with it. She's random, but she caught me off guard." Jackson admitted.<p>

Jordan wasn't even fazed by what happened and shrugged. "Ok." He turned to Pinkie who was happily humming on his shoulder. "Pinkie, hear that? The colonel wants to give you a party walker."

Pinkie Pie froze and the horn fell out of her mouth and she suddenly pressed her face into Jordan's with a giant smile. "Really?" She asked ecstatically.

"Yes." Jordan replied before he managed to pull her off and she began to shake and suddenly explode in confetti covering him in it and the others. Miguel could have sworn he heard a UNSC personnel mutter. "Did she just orgasm?"

Pinkie popped out some pom poms and began to dance around the room with 2 horns in her mouth before Jordan managed to take her into the other room to calm her down. Miguel could only say. "When did Pinkie start following Jordan?" He asked to Twilight who in turn shrugged.

"Well now that's over, all of you are dismissed, and also can someone please clean this mess up." Jackson said as he stepped on a horn.

As they were set to leaving they were stopped by Celestia and Luna outside the CIC, Celestia greeted them.

>"Twilight, Miguel it's good to see you two have bonded rather well."<p>

Twilight blushed as she recalled her brother looking over at Miguel and Luna looking rather curiously at the two of them, but Miguel hadn't shifted much in his expression. Celestia then decided to ask.

>"Twilight I'd like to speak to the major, for a while, alone. If that is fine with you?"<p>

Miguel wasn't sure why she was doing this but he nodded. "I'm available now ma'am, it's not like I have many places to go for the moment." He replied.

Celestia nodded and said.

>"If you have a room we should speak there." She then said to Shining and Twilight.
"If you could excuse me and Miguel, also Shining I believe you wished to speak with your sister did you not?" She smiled.

Shining nodded and Twilight and him and the others of the Equestrian guard along with Luna were heading outside of the base while Miguel and Celestia headed over to a small barracks on the other side of the centre where the UCAF had set up outside to rest the helldivers and marines.

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Elsewhereâ€|

He grasped at the doors to this ancient building, but this place was not holy to him, this was not what he was after. He looked around desperately; he knew it was here, where the filthy primitives had left it, the holy spear of the forerunners, the great ones who had been here. The world burned around him as the battle continued around this city.

His soldiers were expending their lives for the holy journey and he was to deliver them with him to the promises of the Great Journey, it was then the ground exploded in front of him and a human weapon tore through the ceiling of this building. But the he saw it, on the ground, the unbroken crystal floor.

'Lookâ€|' A distant voice echoed in his mind.

It was here, he looked around at the smashed ground to see where the patterns led, he followed it to the throne of this place, he reached its steps and felt around, but what got his attention was the crystal

that adorned the top of the chair, it was a forerunner engraving. As he reached it he felt the top and searched around the bottom till he found it.

'Thereâ€|' The voice reverberated in his mind.

The chair was concealing a movable pedestal, he grabbed the chair and removed it from its mount and found what he was looking for, and it was a hexagonal pattern stone with side grips. He reached over and pulled each one up till the pedestal came to full height. He found that the pedestal had 6 inscriptions engraved on the surface, he couldn't tell what each meant, but he knew now there was a hidden treasure in this place.

'It is hereâ€|' The voice was booming in his mind.

His journey had been worthwhile. And the journey will finally be complete, he'd use this to end the humans and their allies here on this world and ensure the covenant's supremacy in this war, he had to find where this place was though. But as soon as he wanted to leave he felt there was a voice pressuring him from all sides.

'The guiding light of my kind resides here, the Apex Compiler.' He could tell who it was now.

He felt her cold dead hands on his mind and he yelled.
>"Damn you witch!"<p>

He awoke and swung into oblivion and smashed the post of his bed, his fist went right through Nightmare's incorporeal form. She smiled and mused.
>"You're the one who wants the forerunner artefact in the city don't you?" She asked snidely.<p>

He was huffing and caught his breath before replying.
>"It's the only way, for the journey to start, but where is it?" He asked.<p>

"Where else? Right under the ruler of this land's nose and she knows of it, and now you do. All you have to do is take it, and we can end our agreement." She smiled menacingly.

He looked at her uncaring and somewhat unnerved by her fanged smile, she never so openly smiled so maliciously. He knew there was an agenda behind her actions and one that may claim the lives of his warriors, but what choice did he have? Burning this world would take months with only a single ship and he'd return empty handed with only Zaro's head. It seemed wasted for an entire fleet he sacrificed in order to chase that traitor down.

He looked at her and replied with a nod.
>"Very well witch, tell me where it is, and I shall grant you so much."<p>

Nightmare smiled ever more and began. "Canterlot mountains."

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As they went along the grey halls to the nearby private barracks they

arrived at Miguel's room, all officers received their own rooms in the barracks especially helldivers of Miguel's class, as they walked through the hallways to it, he noticed Celestia's expression seemed to break every so often, and something nudged at him. He almost stopped when he saw her make a smile at him, a familiar smile that he couldn't exactly recall where he had seen.

Upon arriving at his private quarters he got out his palm and pressed it against the nearby pad, he used his neural interface and sent the ID code through into it and allowed the room to list him as the new owner. The door slid open after a moment and they stepped into his empty room, there wasn't much to look at, it was standard design like the rest of the UCAF military absolutely Spartan.

There was one gel layer bed, 2 sheets a pillow and a desk with a console and a small paper bin, a closet that adorned the left side corner, a weapons case and repair station and crafting station on hand and a medical station on the right side wall with emergency MRE kits and ammo stashed under it.

Miguel took his seat at his desk and Celestia took her seat on his bed. As she sat down she liked the feel of it. "This is nice, so form fitting rather than my throne, the seat cushion is so stiff even when they replace it with silk and cotton there's always something off about it. My flank is almost always sore from sitting there every day." She muttered.

Miguel was unimpressed. "Princess I know this isn't about just talking about pillows and rumps, and I'm sure the quarter master at Ponyville can provide you a small sample to use, he's given Rarity more than enough."

Celestia looked at him and replied. "Fair enough, though I wasn't sure how I wished to approach you, but I must say there isn't much of a choice now. Miguel, I know more than you trust Twilight with, and I know Miguel isn't your name or even your designation, when you encountered Twilight's mind delve she saw everything, more than she should have, and I saw it as well and cleared them from her mind, but thankfully being as old as I am is a useful thing, being able to withstand years of punishing regrets and mistakes. And I know to act now, Spartan Alpha 257-Shinn, memory is the key isn't it?" She smiled.

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AN: (And cut, we are done for now, I have been running late with a lot of work here and suffering short term depression, but don't worry I'll bounce back soon enough. All said and done, this is still continuing and with an ending you'll all love to see, and I won't make it so terrible on the Mane 6, this'll be trying for all of them, but I don't intend to mess them up. And also character building for Miguel, also known as Shinn 257 from another series which only I know about.)

And also I am working on 19 stories at once, yes 19, and they're killing me horribly. Because Mobile Suit Equestria hasn't launched yet, and then there's a few others coming along, and not to mention a story compilation from IRC Ponychat's roleplaying section which wants to throw their thing in with me. Don't ask.

And also I have been planning a massive competition for the future, don't know when, but it's coming along.

Also more OC characters can be taken, especially when we begin the actual short war between the humans and the covenant ponies are needed for this. No OP or Mary Sue for the love of fuck I got 12 random characters sitting around that are way to OP. And to Lunar Assassin, I am going to have your OC, but he's going to be rather involved in certain fights, hope he likes plasma daggers and explosions.

16. Chapter 16

CH16

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Good Intentions

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From Dr Halsey's journal (Halo Reach collectors addition)

There is an ancient saying, "The beginning of wisdom is ignorance."

So where do we begin to create the ultimate warrior? With innocence.

XXXXXX

31 years ago

It was another sunny day on the beaches of his home town White Crest, the sun shone so brightly above, and the nearby gas giant covered a fair proportion of the day with its 3 moons, it created such a wonderful sight alright. But it was no time for sitting on the beach all day looking at the neighbouring worlds pass through the skies.

"Shinn?" He heard a distant voice called.

He turned to see a woman dressed in summer clothes with a straw hat, he knew it wasn't straw, his older brother told him most of those would be too much trouble to make; he always wondered why his brother wanted to know these things. But Shinn didn't bother recalling, he made his way over to the woman, as he got closer he could see she had blonde hair cut short and neat.

He craned his neck up and replied.

>"Yes?"<p>

Shinn was always quiet, but his mum once told him to reply to someone who wanted to talk with him, it was rude to ignore them. He looked at the woman for a moment, then knelt down to his level and began.

>"My name is Valerie, nice to meet you." She said with a seamless smile.<p>

He nodded and replied a little quietly. "Nice to meet you."

He mimicked most things rather well, he had a fair understanding of everything he came across, his parents were always happy how he managed that, his brother tutored him as much as he could, his sister, he never really saw her. This woman reminded him of his mum, but also his sister, she may never been around as much, but she always smiled to him.

"Shinn, I was wondering, but do you like games?" She asked.

He thought about it and then nodded. Valerie stood back and motioned to the person behind her. "Aaron" Shinn heard as the man stepped forward.

He was somewhat reminiscent of his older brother, he stared at him rather passively as he brought out a small green stone, it had something engraved on it. Aaron noticed him looking at it and smiled as he explained. "It means strength in Korean." He said as he let Shinn look at it closer. He hadn't heard of Korean, at least not very well, he knew it was from earth a place long forgotten in the depths of space.

The man then pulled out 2 rocks both the size of the green stone, he then explained. "You need to catch the jade chip but you need to be fast at it." He explained as he began to toss it into the air with the stones, he caught them and began to juggle them. Shinn's eyes watched the 3 stones flying in their circular pattern.

He watched for a moment longer before he reached out to grab one of the stones, he felt it hit his hand and Aaron stopped juggling, he then pulled his hand back up and looked at his palm, it wasn't the jade stone. "Ah, such is luck." He heard Valerie muttered. He handed the stone back and then she said. "Try it again, but watch it carefully."

He nodded and Aaron got back to juggling them again, this time Shinn looked more aptly at the stones and he kept them in his view, he then saw where it would land, he closed his eyes and then as Aaron tossed it up he struck his hand out and felt it land. He withdrew his hand and then stood there for a moment before his eyes opened and then saw he had the jade stone in his palm.

He smiled at the discovery and then he heard Valerie speak to him.

>"You keep trying, and eventually you'll succeed." She smiled to him. "I hope we meet again." She stood up and followed Aaron and they both departed, leaving Shinn to look at his prize.<p>

He remained admiring the stone at the front of his home; his mum would be home soon.

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He had dinner with his mum, who told him his older brother had gone off to the nearby academy to join the alliance military, his sister was going off to become a nurse and his father was still off world for the week, he'd be home soon. But his time with his mother was relatively good, reading stories and going off to bed.

The last time he ever saw her was that night, he never recalled what happened after that night, and he remembered being in a cramped place, it was hard to move but he was there for a long time. He then fell asleep and woke up in a place so cold, from there he was taken to a large atrium where hundreds of others were, so many children like him.

He remembered seeing Valerie there addressing them as a whole, her words echoing him to his core about what they were to do, what would come from their training and what the future held for mankind if they succeeded. For weeks he remembered the training grounds on Anomia, and then Callistan and then over at 'Prodigal Keep' and finally their medical processes.

He recalled the first genetic augmentations, their injections for hormonal enhancement and then biological augmentations into their skeletal structure; he remembered how much it hurt as they stretched their bodies to adjust to the parameters of the genetic augmentations, it took days for him to recover but he did.

That was only one of 6 augmentations the Alpha Spartans received in their youths till the final stage, he remembered each augmentations as time continued, each one ripping into his body to adjust it for all manners of survival in the field. He recalled the second last augmentation, when his body was supposed to adjust to a neural interface which would allow the control of his entire body channelled to his brain.

It failed on him, he remembered how badly it hurt screaming on the operating table as they attempted to sever the link, but the damage was done, his lower abdomen was crippled for weeks till they retried it with a different procedure. His body narrowly survived the second attempt, but they managed to get him into stable control of his body, however they decided that he couldn't continue on with the last augmentation due to his damage and decided to scrap his position.

He was recalled and then granted an alternative augmentation with cybernetics and nano-machines; he was left to survive as such and then moved him into the UCAF military as a special case and gave him an identity to assume. He never regretted ONI's decision; he was well in serving as a helldiver for the last 27 years, but sometimes he did wonder if there was a place for him as more than just some elite shock trooper.

He never questioned it and lived as he had, there was no place for regret, and he learnt that a long time ago. His life dedicated to fighting the covenant in the war, he spent so many years and he saw so many in his division die, he recalled thousands of missions and nearly millions of battles that occurred in his time.

He remembered his family only in memory, the rest of his life had been fighting for a cause which had made him see something amiable in all mankind, resilience and perseverance against so many odds. Lives were spent by the millions a day, but they were spent well in some sense, the war claimed so many, but they managed to keep fighting.

He saw the war to the battle of Callistan where they engaged the entire covenant primary flotilla; tens of thousands of ships slammed themselves against the UCAF defenders on the world. He fought there

for the first and second battle till the covenant were driven off, but still he saw so much death from the attack, half the UCAF military world was turned to ash and molten glass. And yet there humanity pushed onwards.

It was only when the UCAF were sending out advanced shock forces he began to see another side of man, its determination against such devastating odds. He admitted, humanity wasn't intending to die off any time soon. The covenant threw everything against the UCAF and lost horribly, but not without at least inflicting some sort of damage in return.

Now he was here, where he saw very little war, Equestria was a place of relative peace, a place on the edge of diving towards war with the UCAF guiding them; it made him wonder what was soon to come if the war did end, would the Equestrians go back to peace or become part of the alliance? He held it out of his mind.

He then heard her voice. 'That's all I needed to know.'

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Shinn broke his concentration; he saw there now and looked at Celestia, the goddess of this world, a goddess in some sense, but he had a feeling she was a bit more than that. She looked at him intensely thinking about what she had seen and making passive judgement of him while sitting there.

She blinked finally and then said. "You lived a pained life, where failure led to the deaths of many, but you survived, like mankind, you strived to live against the odds. I wonder why?"

Shinn replied objectively. "It was because my life was needed, I spent my life well princess, I have no regrets."

"You don't care that you lost your family? You don't care you lost so much you loved? You don't care about your future?" She asked definitively.

"It's what I dealt with when Valerie took me into the Spartan Alpha Program, I don't regret it and neither do the other Spartans, we did all we could and we could do no more than what we accomplished. Could they really have done anymore?" He replied.

"But surely there must have been something you missed from your past." She inquired.

"There wasn't much of a past for me, only the war; I got done all that I could do. I've spent my life well princess." He stated duly.

She nodded. "I can see." She smiled sombrely.

He never looked away from a person before but he did at that moment, he took a moment to think about something from his past that correlated to now, women were never his strong suit aside from those in command or those in other helldiver units. He then did remember something, his dog tags; he pulled them out to find his most precious memento, the jade stone from when Valerie recruited him, he still had it.

He smiled if only from the briefest moment indulging in his past once more. But he felt something catch his attention; it was a pale, gold nailed finger touched his chin and he looked up and before he knew it his lips were pressed against the princess's, the thing was he didn't recognise it till his mind recalled something about human social interactions. She had kissed him, she was kissing him.

Celestia broke off from the kiss and gave him a giggle as he looked at her perplexed, he still couldn't understand why she had kissed him. She said laughingly. "You kiss well for a man who lived his entire life as a soldier." She grinned.

He was still perplexed and she shook her head in amusement. "Don't worry Miguel. Your secret is safe with me." She said. "I wonder if you would be any better in bed." She added before standing up.

>"You're a noble man Miguel, a soldier on the outside, but still a child when it comes to social interactions. I think you should be careful with Twilight; she has an interest in you, how you develop your relationship with her is up to you, but at most you should know this, she trusts you." Celestia finished.<p>

He nodded and before he knew it she opened the door and stepped out, leaving him there rather wondering why she had kissed him for. He shrugged and picked himself up and looked for a data pad, he had to write down his sudden experience with the princess. He thought about something else, did Celestia want him for something? He may never know, he shrugged and began writing down the surprising occurrence.

He just wondered if he'd catch up with Twilight she'd be able to shed some light upon Celestia's behaviour, that woman must have some sort of mischief making in her history, he wondered if she actually meant something about pursuing intimacy with him. He shook his head and could only think about what Dr Valerie would say about him pursuing a relationship with a woman or for that matter an alien.

In all honesty she'd probably laugh at him about it; he wouldn't be surprised about it.

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Twilight returned to the library back in town, she hoped all was well, she had been gone from home for a while now, she hoped Spike hadn't gone and done something silly while she had been absent, of course the only thing she would be worried about was if he had gone and invited the cutie mark crusaders into her home.

She remembered the last time they were there; she had to clean up the magical muck called Gak off her library walls which took a week to clean out. She really didn't want another situation like that again the muck in her hair was horrible and Rarity passed out when she saw it. As she returned home she was greeted by Spike who had been rather bored out of his mind since she had departed.

The teenage dragon got her in a bone crushing hug when she got back to him, she was happy to see him as well, she spent the next half an hour updating him about what happened in the past week and over. After the arduous explanation Spike lay on her bed rather tired.

>"You've really got your work cut out for you." He yawned.<p>

"Tell me about it Spike, at first I was excited about all of this, being able to meet another species from a faraway world or place, but now it seems ratherâ€¦" She couldn't really think of anyone who was like Miguel, and her time around him, she then ended. "Tiring." She sighed.

"Are you ok?" Spike asked.

Twilight nodded. "I'm fine Spike; it's just that all the time I've spent my time in Miguel's presence, I just wonder if he's told me everything or for that matter if he's been honest with me." She said aloud.

A voice interjected. "He's honest enough Twilight."

Spike and Twilight turned around and saw Celestia sitting on the end of Twilight's bed. Spike nearly did a summersault when he got off the bed to bow, and Twilight nearly knocked her chair over to do likewise. "Princess you came to the library." Twilight said in a gushing fashion.

The regal pastel alicorn replied. "I came here only for a moment, I really shouldn't be here long I told Luna I'd be back at Canterlot before evening or she'd shout my ear off for leaving her with all the court duties again." She smirked with a shrug.

Twilight broke from her bow and then asked. "How was your talk with Miguel?"

"It was enticing, he's a good talker and kisser." She replied thoughtfully.

"That's good- WHAT?" She exclaimed in utter horror.

Celestia haughtily smiled. "I was showing him my appreciation to all that he did and what he still does now." She replied.

Twilight had no response aside from sitting there in utter shock from learning her mentor had gotten physical with Miguel, Twilight had some feelings to the human, but even she hadn't gone into a relationship, not to mention Miguel's interest in her was merely understanding, rather than intimacy. She didn't believe he would really want to have an intimate relationship.

Celestia added airily. "He was just as surprised as you, just that he didn't bother showing it."

"Umm princess I think you might have 'broken' Twilight." Spike said concertedly as he pointed at her.

Celestia looked over at Twilight who still had her jaw agape in surprise; she magically shut it and added. "Twilight, don't worry, he's not interested in me. I don't even think he could understand how a relationship even works let alone try to make a proper one with a random woman he only knew for a few days." She reassured the stunned unicorn.

Twilight broke from her uneasiness and thought it through, she was right Miguel wouldn't just start to get into a relationship with Celestia out of the blue, it didn't suit him. "Ok, but please tell me why did you kiss him?" Twilight asked.

Celestia pursed her lips and rolled her eyes in thought, and then shrugged as she replied. "I find him rather interesting; he's the only male I believe who lived his life to the best of their extent. He himself agrees he's lived a very long life. Besides, I thought it would be nice to know what a human tasted like." She grinned.

Twilight continued looking at her mentor with a sceptical look. "I really must get going Twilight; Luna will kill me if I take any more time. Don't worry Twilight Miguel will be right along soon enough, hope you enjoy talking to him about me." She finished aptly before making her exit in the flash of an eye.

Twilight still had plenty of questions of what she had done that made her think of Miguel as intriguing; she just hoped he would be willing to explain what Celestia was going on about. Meanwhile Spike, was back go lying down on his bed.

>"Never knew Celestia had a thing for aliens." He muttered.<p>

Twilight added wistfully. "I never knew she had a thing for war veterans for that matter."

Spike looked up from his bed with a quizzical look before Twilight went back to whatever she was doing. Spike had a feeling meeting Miguel was going to be a very interesting situation.

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Jordan never knew Pinkie had a taste of spicy at least not until he let her taste Orilian spices, the pink ball of energy went hopping out of the kitchen with her head on fire and came back 10 seconds later drenched in ice cold water before asking. "Got any more of that spicy stuff?"

He went through 4 hours of taste testing and menu flipping before Pinkie made up her mind, of course she pretty much sampled the entire Orilian spice menu, all 32 dishes. He couldn't imagine where in the fuck the universe had created this pink ball of iridium, but he'd hate to see the best spice eaters go against her.

After picking her way through the last dish of spicy seasoned seafood and noodles she gave a small belch. "That was pretty good." She smiled as if she was satisfied, Jordan couldn't recall anyone besides Fenrisons who has such an appetite for Orilian dishes. He nodded and replied.

>"Glad you liked it, but what do you think I should put on the menu for our new recruits and for everyone else?" He asked.<p>

"I thinkâ€¦ youâ€¦ shouldâ€¦ do them all." She said in unnecessary breaks.

He groaned and smacked his head onto the table with a resounding thud.

>"Ok, okâ€¦ I'll better start organising this as part of the main

course, and then get something more subtle for entrees. You wanna start on desserts?" He asked.<p>

But of course, Pinkie seemed to be absolutely enthusiastic about it, she actually had stars in her eyes which seemed to blind Jordan for a moment and also make him wonder how in the fuck she even managed that. The pink ball bounded over to the kitchen fridge and particle replicator, Jordan stopped her before she did anything.

"Pinkie please for the love of the base camp and the marines, do not start randomly digging through the kitchen menus on desserts and begin making all of them, I'm very strict about what I serve at one time." Jordan warned her.

Jordan was a fighter a joker, but that was when the time was available, not in his kitchen though. She nodded and Jordan let her go, he turned about to get the kitchen stoves and ovens ready, not to mention begin calling up all the chefs. He hoped that leaving Pinkie in charge of something small wouldn't present a problem for the kitchen; of course he might have wanted to take a safer choice and assign Pinkie as a waiter rather than a part of the cooks. But too late for regrets, he began to ring the bell for kitchen staff.

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Meanwhile back in town, Jake was probably going to hang himself if he had to fill out another form, the requisition papers for new synthetic gel used in the combat suits and uniforms would be a literal nightmare for him once he got back to UCAF space. Rarity had come along and taken about 5 litres of the stuff back with her to her shop. Of course he couldn't really stop her; Jace had come along with a requisition form for the unicorn who asked Miguel.

He just hoped it was worth the paper work he was about to get, also because civilians, not to mention non-human getting access to it wasn't exactly in the manual, so he'd be in a bit of trouble when he got back to the alliance and had to fill out a full report. At least he wasn't medical officer Vinters or Dolan, being in their shoes was much harder, considering they had to report on all injuries and KIA and such, but they at least had cybernetic upgrades to help.

Nearby he heard the faint sound of snoring and grumbled to himself, that damn magician who had been bunkered with his convoy was still here after the past 2 days now and the command staff hadn't managed to move her off to some other place. Trixie as she called herself wasn't a bad person, he admitted that, problem was, she was a lousy guest.

He had a feeling this was going to be a very long night.

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Jace was about to kick himself, when he was recalled to help organise the Equestrian volunteers he never expected that organising them would be so difficult, a few of these beings hadn't encountered actual military so he had to admit they had their reasons. But still he was getting annoyed with the few who seemed to have a problem with following orders.

Braeburn had been a fairly easy squad leader to be with, it was just his method of commanding over the others was a small problem. Jace had been getting them into the habit of early drills and introduction of weapons and gear. He had revealed them what they had at their disposal, however there were some concerns.

The use of combat armour the UCAF use they had equipped the Equines was rather insufficient, there was some talk about rearming them with better gear, UNSC marines in charge of training agreed to have upgrades for the Equestrians. The UCAF was planning on releasing better suits; of course making them was the problem, and making them effective for certain classes.

The other issues were the idea for making suits for pegasi and unicorns; however suits for magic users haven't been discovered. There was still the fact that pegasi would need to get suits for agile and versatile bodies, also Rainbow Dash has been petitioning for the new suits, the problem was the suits that RD had been asking for were made from nano-weaved plates turned into a full suit.

The skin suit that RD was asking for though was advanced, more than the heavy plated layered suits, the energised suits were also being considered for use, but it was uncertain if the UCAF would want to begin mass distribution of the armour. Colonel Jackson decided that it was for the best that the Equestrians were equally well armed.

At the moment the colonel was running it by Captain Cutter, the captain had some reservations over allowing the Equestrians access to some equipment the UNSC had at its disposal, but he was able to help deploy his own forces to supplement the UCAFs lack of troops at planned base locations. There were fire bases and easy set up defences between there and Canterlot.

As the horizon settled over the world it was time for people to enjoy the solace of the night, ponies were heading off to get dinner and others were getting some early sleep, in Ponyville a number of ponies both who had been recruited and otherwise were off to the mess hall which had been set up by the UCAF chefs. It was a public place due to the UCAFs policy on cultural exchanges.

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Twilight hadn't exactly been someone who used to like going off to meet many people, but then she came to Ponyville and met her friends, Rarity to Pinkie Pie, they all were her friends, and the odd encounter with other ponies and the ponies she knew on a daily basis. But when she got to the mess hall she suddenly found herself amongst a sea of people she had never seen in her life.

It seemed the UCAF had decided to invite half of Manehattan into the mess hall; the place was packed tight enough that they were nearly elbow to elbow, between all the shoving and pushing it seemed everything was organised, whole rows of tables and chairs aligned and people getting their food and quickly returning to their tables.

She spotted a place where the humans were getting their food; it was separated due to their omnivorous diet, ponies around her who saw the meats the humans were picking out and cutting up seemed to look uneasily at the sight. Twilight admitted that the food wasn't exactly preferred in pony diets but still the humans needed it, at least no

one got into arguments over their food.

It wasn't until she was half way down the line she looked over again and noticed something rather odd; Rainbow Dash was with the humans on their line along with a dozen or so other pegasi who had strips of meat on their plates and such. Rainbow noticed her and waved over to her. Twilight waved back and shouted.

>"Rainbow, why did you get meat?"<p>

The Pegasus took a moment to reply with a rather straightforward answer.

>"It tastes pretty good, and something about getting used to their diet." She replied with a shrug.<p>

Twilight gave her an unamused look before continuing on down the line, she couldn't honestly imagine why in Equestria the Pegasus wanted to even consider eating meat. Twilight had Miguel's memories of food that the human had in his life time, surprisingly all the food he had was mostly protein bars and pastes and such, on certain occasions he had actual solid food.

She recalled everything he had eaten which wasn't much; he had hunted a few animals in his time in wilderness of some alien worlds she couldn't really name, but it seemed relatively safe to assume that it was safe to eat for him. She spent a bit longer reminiscing memories that weren't hers, it wasn't until she reached her turn in the line she noticed a vast array of tables in front of her, all of them had different servings of food, and varying smells.

She could see each table marked out by a symbol above them, one with a green leaf shaped into a circular pattern, blue with a fish, red with a steak, and so forth. The whole area was filled with ponies going over the green section and yellow where fruits were placed, and a few had gone to the other tables, she noted most of those who were at red were going over human cuisines.

She then saw AJ who was with a group of earth ponies from Appleloosa; Braeburn was with them and not to mention half a dozen humans, as they selected something to eat AJ was picking over something chunky. Twilight felt a slight jerk as the metal gate opened for her, she nearly stumbled through it and found herself in the midst of the diners.

She decided to go grab something from the seafood table, she wasn't sure if she would like to eat the normal foods she had every other day, but seafood was good. She made it over to the nearest table and before she made it through getting one plate of seafood, a loud crash followed nearby.

She whipped about to see a human soldier, he was a UNSC marine who had gotten a large tray of food but had lost half the contents on himself and the floor. Nearby, there was a very pleased looking rabbit tapped his foot and had a carrot in other paw nibbling away. The marine was about to go chasing the rabbit but before he could she nearly knocked aside from a yellow blur.

She heard a very familiar voice cry out.

>"Angel! Oh there you are."<p>

Twilight looked around to see Fluttershy holding her 'dear' bunny in

her arms, that didn't resolve the fact that the human marine was still rather annoyed.

>"Hey lady, how about you take your pet outside of the damn mess hall. Or I swear I'll do it myself in a moment." The marine fumed.<p>

"But Angel didn't mean it, did you Angel?" She asked the bunny who looked unamused, but shook his head.

"Oh right the damn fucking bunny can understand that?" The marine shouted hysterically with satire annoyance. He got closer to Fluttershy who shied away as he pointed at finger at her.
>"Get your bunny out of her now lady."<p>

Twilight, was about intervene when she saw the noticeable figure of Miguel appear behind the marine. "Is there a problem here?" Miguel asked startling the marine.

The soldier turned to face the helldiver.
>"What's it to you?"<p>

"Everything marine, your conduct is unbecoming of a marine of your stature." Miguel replied.

The marine didn't take the criticism very well. "Is that so?" The marine said. The marine stood there for a moment and then attempted to sucker punch Miguel. However the major was expecting the response and reacted accordingly, he grabbed the marine's arm and then twisted and lifted the man.

The marine was slung into the nearby stand of fruits where he smashed through the produce at speeds that would make a wonderbolt cry. The marine landed on his back covered in fruit juice and pulp, and now sporting a dislocated arm. Miguel added dully.
>"Now you're in violation of your uniform code."<p>

The nearby UCAF marines whistled at the sight, a medic and a few UNSC marines arrived to pick up the injured marine. Jordan stepped in and said.
>"Oh for fucks sake you better not have started another fruit fight." He stated as he saw the mess.<p>

"Sorry Jordan, just some hot head." Miguel replied.

Jordan shrugged.
>"Clean up on aisle 4." He shouted to a small team of cleaners who appeared and began picking up the mess.<p>

Twilight decided to catch up with Miguel who was helping Fluttershy up.
>"You should keep your pets clear of the marines and military personnel; they're rather tense at the moment." He said to her.<p>

Fluttershy nodded and replied.
>"Thank you Mr Miguel."<p>

He turned away as Twilight arrived and Fluttershy greeted her.
>"Oh Twilight, I'm alright." She said as the unicorn was looking her over.<p>

"Good to hear, you should probably take a seat with Rarity and Pinkie once they get here. Applejack and Rainbow are both testing out the human cuisines over there." She pointed where UCAF personnel were sitting. "I'd advise not going over there, but you can if you feel unsafe." Twilight suggested.

"Thank you Twilight, I probably should." She said before getting a plate of something before walking off with Angel on her shoulder.

Miguel was still there when she turned to face him.

>"Thanks for looking after Fluttershy." She said gratefully.<p>

He replied.

>"The marine's attitude was out of line. She needed help, besides if I recall you care for her. You care for all of them, don't you?"<p>

Twilight admitted.

>"Yes, I care for all of them, I care for how they are, I just hope Fluttershy doesn't get traumatized from the experience she isn't one to face that kind of confrontation. She's one of the few close friends I have; actually she's more like one of the few I really understand."<p>

"You remind me too much of herâ€|" He mumbled as he walked off.

She perplexed wondering what he meant by what he said. But before she could catch up, he was surrounded by a squad of marines who were in his unit; he seemed to be quite familiar with all of them. Twilight realised that he had close friends as well; but she wasn't sure though about what he meant about who she reminded him about.

She grabbed a serving of vegetables with her seafood before proceeding to find a table to sit at, she located one where most of her friends had gathered, AJ, RD, and FS had picked the one table where most of the UCAF were sitting at. As she got over to them, they all noticed a group of marines who were clustered around someone, as they reached them; they saw it was Rarity surrounded by some well-dressed marines.

"Hello darlingsâ€|" She said as she pulled out a chair to sit at.

"Rarity what's with all grey and white?" AJ asked.

The marines with Rarity had rather different suits on now, from the original grey and black fatigues which were body strap sealed, they had zippers and gold studded buttons in place, it was hopefully only decorative features rather than actually replacing all of the woven connectors in their uniforms that hold it together when in active use.

Rarity explained.

>"It's my gift to all these boys; they seemed to like it quite a lot." She happily stated. "The uniforms aren't as constricting and also are granted flexibility thanks to that gel they used, reflexive and comfortable, quite a useful combination in my opinion." She gestured to the UCAF marine sitting next to her who's uniform seemed

to remain relatively unrumpled.<p>

"Great to hear, how's this going to help with the war?" AJ asked.

"It'll help raise morale besides it wouldn't hurt to get something a bit more form fitting in right?" Rarity replied.

It was true in some sense, Twilight decided to inquire. "Do you intend to design formal wear mostly for the humans?"

Rarity paused a moment in thought before replying.

>"I feel comfortable with it; I think they're in dire need of a makeover in my honest opinion."<p>

"Don't expand that into pony ranks to Rarity." Rainbow added.

Twilight nodded and then asked the others.

>"How was training today?"<p>

AJ and RD looked at each other and scratched their heads. AJ went first.

>"Well, it was good for a whileâ€|" RD added. "And then it went downhill from there."<p>

"Huh?" Twilight looked at them quizzically.

AJ smiled sheepishly.

>"Well look at it this way, Jace wasn't there so he didn't go kicking a fuel drum when he saw the havoc that followed right after we got into the barracks."<p>

"Or when Snowflake accidentally tipped a whole barrel of ice cold water on the sergeant's head when he screamed out, 'YEAH'." RD finished.

"How didn't we hear about this?" Rarity asked the marines at the table.

They looked at each other and shrugged but not before one with a black cap said.

>"Probably because of Jackson's rule of embarrassment, he said no one should allow incompetence to show especially with the creation of a new division. We had some trouble when we started out, but whoa you girls and guys here know how to make a POG look good."<p>

"POG?" Twilight said in confusion.

"People other than grunts, mostly civilians given uniforms and sent to do menial tasks, of course they weren't allowed in the frontlines aside from driving in new supplies and such, they rarely see front line combat. And trust me on this, your newly founded troop better get up to the Colonel's standards he expects things to be sorted soon." The marine said before digging back into his meal.

"He's right you know." Jace said as he arrived at their side of the table.

RD saluted him which made the others stare at her in confusion before

she relaxed.

>"No one salutes outside of full uniform RD or for that matter you don't do it here, do it when we're in the public limelight or when were on a ship. For the moment you have no need for formalities." Jace explained.<p>

RD nodded.

>"Sorry the sergeant kept emphasising the point with a shove when we forgot."<p>

"No problem, but don't worry about Keller, he's been a hard ass since day one about grooming and formalities, don't let him get to you, he was a drill instructor on the Avidian front for about 4 years when they drafted him here. He's stuck in our sides like a thorn and the colonel only keeps him around because command doesn't want to send him some place he might fuck something up." Jace explained.

AJ sighed.

>"Good to hear. So does his temper usually show?" She asked.<p>

"Usually, it's best to ignore it, poor bastard hasn't gotten much love from his superiors in the past few years and so he's been trying to prove he could be a good instructor so they'd send him back to his old post. So far he's proven incapable." Jace replied while stirring his drink.

Twilight listened to the conversation intently between her friends who joined the infantry and what Jace was explaining. It lasted half way through their meals before RD asked.

>"Any idea on what's going on with our new armour?"<p>

Jace looked at her before leaning in.

>"The armour's still in testing phase, the colonel's unsure about just making the suits, he's fine with Equestrians lasting longer in a fight, but there's a lot that can go wrong with making mass produced combat suits and leaving them in the hands of beings we've known for a short time."<p>

"So we're not going to get new armour out?" RD asked.

"At the moment, no, but that doesn't mean there hasn't been some effort to make the suits. At the moment the colonel's been with Jake thinking if the production of some variation of our suits would be better for infantry. MK III Path Finder armour is being considered." Jace replied as he pulled a pad.

Jace hit a few buttons on his personal pad which emitted a short holographic image of a suit; it had the image of a figure encased in an armoured suit with helmet which possessed red visor and gas mask. There was also a green trench coat with worn dark pants, a pair of black boots and that was all part of the suit. It seemed quite sturdy.

"This is going to be the new armour of the infantry, I hope you get used to it, it's going to be yours hopefully in the next few days, it has infrared goggles with enhanced night vision, the breather can hold up to 10 minutes of oxygen, there should be an attached tank to it but that's only for actual riots. There are a few locations where it's not as protected, which will be supplemented by gel layers." He

said as he finished going through the specs.

AJ whistled. "So it's going to be ours for the war against the covenant?" She asked.

"Yes, as for your Pegasus counterparts, we have no idea, the suits we gave are the only ones light enough to wear without having to strip down all the ceramic plates and titanium layers, we've been planning for a much lighter suit, but that's still up for debate, you're going to have to wait." He shrugged.

RD sighed. "Well I'm good with flying quickly, besides armour hold us down."

"Yeah, but it also stops covenant snipers from picking you out of the skies with impunity." A voice cut in.

Spitfire hobbled in on a bandaged leg and wing along with her there was Thunderlane supporting her.

>"I see you're going over our new equipment." Spitfire said.<p>

"Yeah, well it's not completed as of yet, and there have been plans for unicorn based magical armour, though that's just in theoretical stage if our good doctorâ€|" Jace motioned over to the UNSC table where Dr Anders was sitting by herself with a bowl of stir fry and a cup of tea. "â€|Gets through it soon."

"Good, I'd rather not be left in the hospital longer than a few days next time." She replied as she sat down.

"Hey when do we get to see more action?" RD asked.

"Once you can get yourselves organised and you've done the basics we'll let you provide aerial support, after which you can do some more tricky missions. But then again the war might end in less than a month if the covenant is bottled down and we get to pressing them." Jace explained.

"Don't doubt Vesdarea, he's a lot more cunning than he seems. He's merely bidding his time." Zaro said as he appeared from behind Jace.

"Damn it man don't do that, you know you aren't supposed to be using your cloak here." Jace snipped at the elite.

"Nervous human?" He asked with an unamused look.

"No just habit, usually when someone phases back into reality it tends to end up with someone either getting stabbed in the back or someone's neck being snapped or both." Jace replied.

The elite shrugged and replied.

>"Fair enough."<p>

Zaro pushed in between Jace and another marine and took a seat.

>"So where's our technical force gone?"<p>

Twilight asked. "You mean the Dragoons?"

"Someone call our names?" A voice interjected.

They looked around to see 4 members of the dragoons there.

>"How's it going?" Elson said as he got his team sitting on the other side of their table.<p>

"Not much, we've just been discussing the current situation with our newest members, not to mention how the war is going to play out, I mean with all this activity I'm pretty sure the covenant force that Vesdarea has sitting up in his command ship are going stir crazy with waging a war with us soon enough." Jace replied in a thoughtful tone.

"Doubt it, the covenant aren't going to make a move unless to engage us on their borders, at the moment our kill teams should be gathering detailed maps of their positions, soon enough we can go ahead and begin hitting them before they can organise their army and launch a full scale spearhead into Equestrian territory." Elson added.

"And what if they attack now?" A deeper voice inquired.

They turned to see the major; Miguel had his team now sitting nearby with himself standing behind Twilight. Jace replied. "Well then we're all being deployed if they attack now, the attack would have to be countered immediately there's no hesitation about that, but why attack now?" Jace said quizzically.

"The covenant has a history of being ecstatic, Vesdarea is a no different, he'd go around killing his own officers at times and ordering his men to his death, but not now, it seems he's gone quiet. It is quite opposite of his usual behaviour." Zaro pointed out.

"It's true, either he's completely gone and changed his approach at fighting us, or he's talking to himself." Jace added.

"So where does this put us?" RD asked.

"In the biggest fucking mess you can imagine, an army of covvies right over the hill with an insane, paranoid commander who has mood swings every hour, he could be raging over the fact that he hasn't attacked or he could be consoling himself with the fact there's some target opportunity that's just waiting around the corner." Jace replied with a grim smile before downing the contents of a flask he kept hidden.

"Whatever the case may be we're going full swing on his ass as soon as he attempts to breach the defensive perimeter we've put up." Elson said confidently.

"That's good and all, but who said he's going to bother engaging the defensive formation we've built?" Matthis from Echo squad replied.

It was then the doors to the mess hall burst open with a panic stricken Young Blood marine shouting out.

>"Helldiver's we've got a situation!" He barked as he stopped. "The covenant have launched a sneak attack on the Equestrian capital as of 19:15, they're attacking Canterlot!"<p>

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AN: Done

Finally got this damn thing completed and also I don't know what's going on with chapter names.

Next up! The battle for Canterlot!

And I am still accepting MLP OCs

Remember the story is Anthro based.

There are a lot of other things happening pretty soon, and also the next few segments are going to be big!

17. Chapter 17

CH16

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Embracing Fate

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Time: 18:40

Location: Canterlot- Castle

Luna returned to the city and soon found herself bogged down with work of course as per usual Celestia decided to take a detour to enjoy a few moments with her student and her friends. She returned to the city with a rather smug look on her face and then talked with Luna.

>"How was your talk sister?" Luna asked.<p>

"Interesting, there's something about Miguel, something no one else can see." She replied deeply in thought.

"At least you aren't swooning over him." Luna added cheekily.

Celestia broke from her thoughts once she heard the comment and gave her sister a mock threatening look, and then got back to her thoughts. She began to explain her mind delve into the veteran's mind. "Miguel is something of an enigma, he's been used as a weapon, failed as one as well, and at best he considers his own purpose to be nothing more than professional. He intends to fight this war as another soldier, as meaningless or as meaningful as his place is."

"Sounds like someone who is trying to run away from something." Luna analysed.

"Possibly, but there's something else about him I just don't know how to put." Celestia shook her head as she explained.

"Whatever it may be, I do believe our guests do have to continue their main objective, to defeating the covenant, when all the fires have been put out, I think it'd be best to discuss this. At the moment, we have a number of alarmed citizens to deal with." Luna urged Celestia.

Celestia decided to agree there was too much happening to focus on one person, and that coupled with the fact that the UCAF had been marshalling and rallying as many citizens to help in the fight against the covenant, there was still so much to do before the covenant launched another attack. At least that was what she believed.

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Shining Armour and his team had been recalled to Canterlot, they escorted the princess for part of the trip, but on returning to the castle the members of the Elite Guard had been posted at highly sensitive locations over Canterlot, mainly the hidden research centre and critical locations, such as the archives of the Princess and throne room.

Shining had been curious as to why his team had been recalled, but when it came to the princesses he knew it had to be of some importance. Shining was patrolling the inner sanctum of the castle's towers. It was here that the princess had ordered him to protect, needless to say he was surprised that she had asked him to guard these levels.

The inner towers were said to be some sort of magic focal points which channel energy from deep reservoirs to some sort of deep chamber, whatever it was, Shining was left to guard it for the time being before guards from the city would be freed to help. Shining did have time to think about all that had happened in such short time.

It felt rushed, the whole UCAF integration, not to mention all of the humans running around to protect Equestria, and neighbouring kingdoms. Heck he didn't even get much time to enjoy his honeymoon with Cadence in the Crystal Empire, after their adventure beating back Sombra it seemed as if there was a universal barrier keeping them from at least enjoying one day alone.

Of course Shining wouldn't neglect his duties, but it seemed a little bit tedious having to deal with all of this before getting the chance to at least rest. But he knew that this would be over sooner or later, the militarisation of Equestrians seemed to be one of his concerns though, and the UCAF mentality seemed to have caught on with the Equestrian people.

But once it was over, would life return to normal? Whatever normal was in this world of magic and mana tech, he hoped that he would be at peace with Cadence when things calm down. As he moved along the next corridor from doors of the chamber he began to notice something. The sound of silence, it seemed strange now that he thought of it.

He headed up to the upper level to check on the other guards, it was only then that the silence was broken, he felt the castle shake at its foundations, it was as if a flight of dragons had decided to use

the castle for a target he could hear explosions and rocking of the lighting fixtures creaking as the castle shook.

He stepped up to the next level to find himself in the midst of panic, guards were rushing to whatever station they were assigned to or to wherever there was a breach, Shining stopped a guard. "Soldier what's happening?"

"It's the covenant sir; they somehow managed to sneak 5 of their vessels beneath our radars and have begun to assault the castle courtyard. We're going to engage them now." The guard replied.

Shining was startled the Covenant had launched an attack now? What could have provoked them to act now, or for that matter why attack Canterlot? He felt like something was off, but he got to the point. "Get going soldier, but alert the others to send a detachment here, I will need some extra guards to protect this level. I'll join you once they arrive."

The guard understood and nodded before hurrying off to meet the enemy outside. Shining didn't like it, here he was couped up inside the castle while a war was being waged outside, but hopefully Celestia and Luna were dealing with the covenant.

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"I hope that the UCAF sends help now!" Luna yelled over the top of her voice as a plasma blast sent guards flying.

Luna, had been the first to arm herself and join the guards at the courtyard, the battle was going hazily. The sudden assault was focused on the walls of the castle, which were partially demolished in the first plasma volley had caught them off guard. It was a terrifying sight watching whole parts of the reinforced limestone, steel and marble wall turned to slag in moments.

Luna had joined just as the covenant began to land their first troops, grunts and jackals made their presence known as they began to lash out with plasma rifles, pistols and carbines. The hiss of grenades flying through the air was met with magic, Luna recalling the UCAF reports knew that the weapons weren't infallible.

She used her magic and threw the grenades back at the grunts who had lobbed them. Her counter wasn't unnoticed as the grunts ran helter skelter for cover, but for the stubby chums they didn't make it far from their own plasma grenades. The blue balls of fire found their mark on a fair number of the clustered mobs of aliens.

In moments of panic the aliens were vaporised by bright flashes of plasma fire, they took a number of their allies with them as they panicked enabling Luna to rally the Royal Guards and her own troops to her side. The Night Watch Riflemen gathered behind a wall of magic wielding unicorn knights who set up a defensive wall against the covenant assault.

"My Children of the Night let us repulse these despicable creatures!" Luna roared over the battle.

A chorus of cheers followed as they retaliated in kind, the riflemen

fired their assault rifles in a barrage against the advancing covenant troops, grunts and jackals fell, but the shielded jackals and skirmishers weathered the wall of bullets. The survivors began to cluster together and advance in a phalanx formation.

Luna figured they might do something like this, she had to act fast, she shouted out orders. "Unicorn mages to the rear, Knights remain in position, riflemen forward, and fliers to the air do not engage until told so!"

They did as she ordered, the Night Reavers, her specialised flying guard rose above the phalanx of jackals and skirmishers, at that point the riflemen got into position and the knights held up their magical shields. Mages prepared themselves as Luna rose a bit over the troops and charged up her spell, she knew that these creatures were fairly weak in few numbers, also close combat.

"Mages on my mark!" She sucked in a great volume of air and focused on which direction to fire.

Once sufficiently charged, she knew to let loose her greatest of attacks.

>"FIRE!"

Her voice was amplified by a hundred fold as her mages bolstered her volume; the princess of the night had let loose a shockwave which sent the covenant force flying off onto their collective backsides. Across the night the explosion of noise could be heard across the entire city of Canterlot, and it went nearly as far as Ponyville.

The Night Guards and troops were thankful they weren't in the direction of the blast or they'd be fairly deaf. Luna still recovering from her Grand Canterlot Voice spell, managed to utter out her last command. "Night Reavers engage!" She managed to shout slightly.

She went back to the ground as the flying bat winged members of her own force rushed down to finish off the disoriented covenant troops. The skirmishers were the only ones who managed to recover fastest, but not enough to reorganise the still shattered covenant formation. They and most of their kind were slaughtered by the agile Night Reavers.

Luna had to clear her throat after using such volume, while her troops and the Royal Guard pushed the Covenant back to the wall, she noticed something strange, it was a feeling she hadn't felt in years.

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Celestia had known that this was inevitable; she had a sneaking suspicion that there was a greater reason for all that was happening now. And this only confirmed it, as she had gone back to her study to check on certain items of significance she noticed the aura of darkness which seemed to shroud Canterlot.

At first she thought it was from the hatred of the Covenant against the humans, but no this was far more malevolent, and it was then she realised what it was. Nightmare's shroud, a special attack which

Nightmare had unleashed during the war 1000 years earlier, it had once encompassed enough of the kingdom that almost no one could sense the movement of magic wielding warriors Nightmare commanded.

But this time it seemed as though it had worked to blind all the arcane-tech which were developed to detect approaching vessels and people from great distances. It was the only logical explanation; Nightmare was still very much alive, she had at first felt as if she should bolt out of her chambers to begin searching for the malevolent spirit, but no that was exactly what Nightmare wanted.

As the attack began on the city, Celestia against her better judgement decided it was time to meet Nightmare once more, face to face. She cloaked her presence amongst the ambient mana of the world and waited in the one place she knew that Nightmare was surely to go. She only hoped that the Elite Guard were capable of handling it.

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Vesdarea had felt no compulsion for his warriors as he sent them off to fight against the weaker alien defenders, they'd either succeed in buying him the time to recover the artefact or at least wear down the defenders enough for him and his retinue to bash their way back out. He stood inside of his Lich-class assault gunboat watching as the battle played out.

His Lich along with 3 others were carefully making their approach from above the battle while one of his Corvettes engaged in battle with the local defenders. The fight was going well considering all of the collateral damage being wrecked at the castle, but the large structure of rock, marble and metal didn't matter.

What mattered to him were the inner towers, he knew it was there. 'It is there you fool.' The spirit hissed inside his mind. He preferred it if the pompous beast shut up, but of course no luxury here. As the Lich's arrived close enough to the tower, the lower hatches opened up to let each team deploy.

Dozens of specialist grunts jackals and elites fell out of the back of the large assault boats and down onto the spires of the towers, each tower had to be captured before Vesdarea could get to the artefact. Once each team deployed, all he now had to do was wait.

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Shining truly couldn't believe what was happening, as the battle raged outside, it seemed one had now reached the interior of the castle, and he received his reinforcements but only had enough time to tell them to guard the massive magical doors before the tower fell under attack. He was nearly kicked off balance as the first assault breached the higher levels of the tower.

Shouts of panic and death followed as the battle intensified, Shining broke from his post and headed up to meet the aliens with a few guards, but he didn't need to go that far or really anywhere. His enemies found him upon reaching the doors to the next level of the tower; he narrowly dodged being shot in the face by a needler carbine before slamming the door in the face of his attacker.

He sealed the door with magic before he and his warriors began a rapid descent back down to the inner sanctum, it was here that he and his guards decided to begin fortifying their position. Shining ordered them to rip down the decorative ceramic pillars of the inner sanctum to use as cover; of course he'd probably get an earful from the architect of the castle later but it was necessary.

As the pillars came down, the doors to the chamber were assaulted; thuds from blasts of plasma and energy weapons got the guards to hurry their pace. Shining positioned himself in the front to use his magic to form a shield once the doors finally gave way, he left his mages in the rear and got the other guards in the front to meet the Covenant as they'd come through the doorway.

Good thing was that there was no cover for the aliens; it'd be a lot easier to take them down as they came in. Shining drew his magical sword, a specially crafted blade with magical gems embedded in the hilt and a Colt Revolver, the gems in his sword provide some much needed help if anything decided to pick a fight with him in CQC, but what worried him was the shields that the Covenant used, they'd effectively neutralise his sidearm.

He hoped it was just limited to a few, he doubt he could handle a full strike force on his own, as the sounds of battle intensified outside, the noise from the clash inside the castle also drew closer. He pointed his revolver down the hallway expecting the next thing to walk through was a squat alien with a curved plasma pistol.

He was in for a surprise. The faint noise of a click was heard and then a hissing followed, Shining ducked behind a pillar immediately knowing that familiar sound, a plasma grenade; a mysterious transparent figure tossed the grenade from the other end of the hallway into the inner sanctum. Shining only had moments before the grenade exploded.

He caught a glimpse of the bright explosion which left his sight a little blurry, but he felt the over wash of heat from the plasma ignite the air around him, he was thankful for taking cover or he'd have surely been roasted by the heat. But he knew his assailant was undoubtedly making its next move.

Shining knew the limitations of his magic, strong barriers are one thing, sensing an enemy who happened to be invisible, that's another thing. He peered from his cover back to the hallway, the transparent figure had already moved away; how he was going to hit this creature or even harm it was going to be the real trouble.

Shining thought about it carefully, he knew that he had only one chance to get this right, he charged a small air spell into his left hand and primed his revolver with a magical charge; he could catch the invisible enemy with a shot to the head. He recalled that the UCAF had supplied intel on the classes of the Covenant, usually a recon specialist had fairly weak shields for prolonged use of stealth fields.

He counted in his head, a short breath, and he rushed from cover, his wind spell in hand, he shoved forward and shouted. "Burst." The spell was unleashed and air was blasted in one direction. The Elite who had been checking the room had little time as he was knocked back from

the burst of air. The gale force wind was enough to hit the shield of the Elite and light him up.

Shining saw through the stealth field and took the shot at the surprised Elite, his revolver let loose a violet blast which expelled its deadly spell charged bullet. The shot managed to penetrate the shield; however it did not penetrate the armour of the Elite. It instead struck a hardened plate of the Elite's light armour and ricocheted off of it.

But amazingly the deflected bullet struck the unarmoured knee; it just managed to impact with enough force to send the alien kneeling. Seeing this, Shining got his revolver and placed two more shots into the Elite, his two shots were pointed straight at the Elite's head; the first round struck the helmet of the alien, the reflective glass like helm shattered at the first round.

The following round managed to strike inside the broken helmet and pierce the head of the Elite; it managed to make a guttural sound before dropping dead. Shining looked at the now corpse of the Elite, he took a moment to take a breath, he had expected that to be slightly harder, but then again, he caught it off guard with magic.

He turned around to check on the hallway for any further signs of enemies, but he hadn't gotten as far when he felt something grab his shoulder. He managed to get sight of what was holding him. The shimmering light of the creature in question was another Elite, but this time much bigger, and a lot more armoured.

Its slit eyes stared down at him with a sign of annoyance, it managed to grunt out.

>"Pitiful warrior, you should have struck slowly. As for youâ€|" The Elite grabbed Shining's arm as he tried to twist around with his sheathed sword.<p>

The Elite yelled as he suddenly threw Shining backwards. "You shall die weaklingâ€|" Shining spun through the air before his back made contact with the hard wall of the sanctum; he felt his ribs crack as he slammed into it at terminal velocity. Shining managed to stay conscious even though he should have blacked out from the bone cracking experience.

He managed to get back on his feet as the huge Elite made his way towards the entrance to the inner sanctum. 'No you don'tâ€|' He shouted inwardly.

Shining brought out all of his magical power and worked a single devastating spell he could concoct, 'Thundering Dawn', it was a dangerous spell since its area of effect was large, not to mention anyone in reach of the blast would undoubtedly get hit as well. But there was little time to think, he knew he'd either pass out soon, or die at the hands of this Elite.

Whatever Celestia had hidden inside the chamber had to be guarded at all costs. He brought out his arm and chanted the incantations, this sort of spell was older and a lot more dangerous which was why it required such incantations before use. He finished just as he managed to stagger upright, he moved in as the Elite began to probe the heavy locked doors to the inner chamber.

"Thundering Dawn!" He uttered as he got into range of the elite.

The Elite managed to turn about as Shining pushed his arm out to strike him with the magical attack. The Elite didn't entirely seem surprised, but was definitely caught off guard; the blast caught him in the face. Shining only managed to feel the raw energy of his spell release as he was then encompassed in blinding pain and the sound of rushing wind.

The sanctum was encased in a vibrant explosion which would have been felt by all who were in proximity and those who were outside of the city. As the tower of the castle exploded, down below Princess Celestia was attempting to track down as many numbers of the Covenant with her guards and warriors.

She felt the rush of the explosion and knew immediately what that was. She donned her golden helmet decorated with the various enchanted gems which worked to protect her from the dangers of battle and enhanced her combat capabilities in spells and magic. She summoned her magic and charged up a spell to transport herself and her guards to the tower.

But as she attempted to, her magic suddenly gave out on her!

>'What's going on?' She thought to herself.<p>

Her guards who also had a mage attempted to transport them immediately, but he too had no means of transporting them. It was then she felt the aura, an aura she hadn't felt in a long time!

>'No!' She realised what she was feeling.<p>

Back above in the interior of the tower, Shining felt his body ache all around as he regained consciousness, he could tell that he wasn't going to be walking for a while. He tried to stand, but got nothing. But it wasn't only that, he noticed something was different, he could see within the inner sanctum his opponent was still here.

"That should have destroyed most of this tower." He muttered to himself.

It was then he saw it, the shadow of the Elite, stepping out from behind the smoke and forwards.

>"You pitiful vermin!" It growled with a look of pure rage.<p>

"How dare you interfere, in my plans! mortal." It uttered in a brooding fury as it grabbed him by the neck.

Shining could see the figure's hands materialise with its body, its large frame was easily twice his size, and its armoured carapace of dull matte black was pockmarked in places, with plates engraved in shapes and patterns he had never seen before. But the most distinct feature was the face of his enemy, its hung mandibles dripped with a small amount of blood.

Its slitted yellow eyes stared into his soul, it held absolute hatred for him or for that matter anything. He grunted out a response.

>"You won't win monster, whatever you accomplish here, the others will beat you." Shining smirked as he spat into the creature's face.<p>

The alien enraged at the display of defiance brought its other arm to level and activated an energy sword. The sharp hiss of plasma igniting caught Shining's attention.

>"You'll die for your insolence pathetic creature." It said to Shining.<p>

In that moment Shining could only help but wonder if Cadence, and Twilight would be alright. He had breathed out when the Elite plunged the energy weapon right into his mid abdomen, he could feel the searing heat from the blade cutting through his body, it was short and painful, but his body lost feeling right afterwards.

'I'm sorryâ€¦ Twi.' He reflected upon his little sister as he lost consciousness.

Shining's body went limp in the hands of the Elite, and the alien sneered at the body of the slain before tossing Shining's body awayâ€¦ There was still much to be done, but as it turned away, a force began to shake the castle, and it was then the Elite realised, it wasn't alone.

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Celestia arrived shortly to investigate the situation within the Courtyard, she busily summoned magical bolts of fire and spell wards to keep the Covenant from landing on the ground, but her power within the fight wasn't needed as Luna kept her warriors within the fray. But as the fight continued, she retreated back into the castle to begin a counter-spell to the one Nightmare had cast.

It took what seemed like hours, but she managed to crack the shroud which Nightmare had cast upon the Castle, but what she received only alarmed her. She could feel Nightmare's essence up above, within the inner sanctum of the 5th tower. Celestia made attempted to summon her spell to teleport her, but she recalled the inner sanctum was protected by an anti-magic barrier to stop anyone from just teleporting in.

She made the teleport as close to the sanctum as possible, landing on the seventh level below the sanctum, she propelled herself with as much magic as she could pump into her limbs. She arrived at the sanctum within the span of a couple of minutes, but by then she only rushed in to see her timing couldn't have been worse.

She could only watch as her protégé's brother being tossed aside like a ragdoll as the form of Vesdaera, the Zealot Master of the Covenant once more attempt to breach the sanctum. She felt something she hadn't in so many years, a part of her she had suppressed as long as she had lived.

Anger boiled through her heart as she looked upon the wrecked chamber, she let her fury imbued her with power as she roared.

>"TO THE GATES OF TARTARUS WITH YOU!" She screamed with the fury of a burning sun.<p>

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AN: Sorry for the short chapter, but yes, this is going to continue. Sorry for not updating sooner, I've got over 32 stories to write and a lot of other stuff happening at the same time, you can't possibly expect me to update everything within a matter of minutes do you?

End
file.